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PARENT, STUDENT, AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS
OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AT SUBURBAN HIGH

by

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Bachelor of Science, Dickinson State University, 1998

Master of Education, University of North Dakota, 2004

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

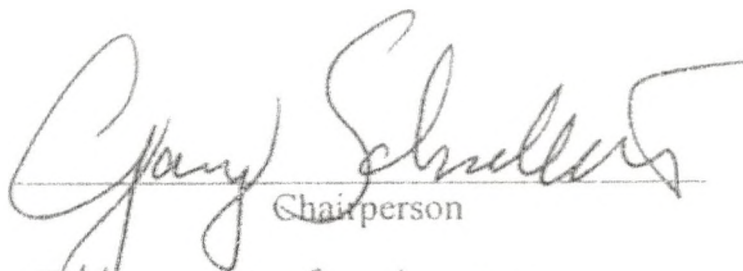




Doctor of Education

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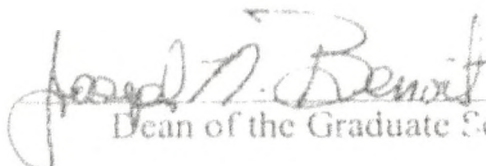
May

2009

This dissertation, submitted by Cory J. Steiner in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.


Chairperson





This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.


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Department Educational Leadership

Degree Doctor of Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Theoretical Framework	5
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose of the Study	9
Significance of the Study	9
Delimitations	10
Assumptions	10
Definitions of Terms	10
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
Definitions of Climate	13
Culture	14
Differences in Climate and Culture	16
Elements of a Positive Climate	18
The Effects of School Climate	21
Assessment and Instrumentation	24

	Developing a Positive Climate.....	27
III.	METHODS	37
	Introduction.....	37
	Research Methodology	37
	Populations Studied	38
	Survey Instrument.....	38
	Procedure	42
	Analysis of Data.....	43
IV.	RESULTS	45
	Description of the Sample.....	45
	Research Questions.....	48
	Research Question 1	48
	Research Question 2	53
	Research Question 3	62
	Research Question 4	65
V.	SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	69
	Summary.....	69
	Discussion.....	71
	Research Question 1	71
	Research Question 2	72
	Research Question 3	73
	Research Question 4	74

Limitations	76
Conclusion	77
Recommendations.....	78
Recommendations for Educators	78
Recommendation for Future Research.....	78
Recommendation I—Teachers.....	79
Implementation Model.....	82
Recommendation II—Students.....	88
Recommendation III—Administration	91
Recommendation IV—Parents	93
Recommendation V—Joint Team.....	95
Recommendation VI—Suburban High School District	96
Recommendation VII—University of North Dakota Educational Leadership Program.....	98
Conclusion	99
APPENDICES	100
REFERENCES	106

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Comparison of Reliability of the Five Dimensions of the OCDQ-RS and Suburban High Results.....	40
2. Stakeholder Participation by Completed Survey (n=570)	46
3. Teacher Demographic Information Regarding Gender and Years of Teaching Experience (n=93)	46
4. Student Demographic Information on Gender and Year in School (n=535)	47
5. Parent Demographic Information on Type of Family and Number of Children (n=161)	47
6. Means of Teachers at Suburban High (n=93)	49
7. Means of Parents at Suburban High (n=161).....	51
8. Means of Students at Suburban High (n=570).....	52
9. Significant Differences among Teachers, Parents, and Students for Significant ANOVAS	54
10. Significant Differences between Teachers, Parents, and Students for Significant ANOVAS.....	58
11. Summary of Means for Significant Differences between Teachers, Parents, and Students for Significant ANOVAS	60
12. Significant Differences between Teachers, Parents, and Students Based on the Five Dimensions for Significant ANOVAS.....	61
13. Significant Differences among Teachers Based on Years of Experience for Significant ANOVAS.....	63

14.	Significant Differences between Teachers Based on Years of Experience for Significant ANOVAS.....	64
15.	Differences in Means and Significance among Parents Based on Number of Children Who Graduated from Suburban High for Significant ANOVAS	66
16.	Significant Differences between Parents Based on the Number of Children Who Graduated from Suburban High.....	68
17.	Average Means for Teachers, Parents, and Students for the Five Dimensions as Measured by the OCDQ-RS.....	82

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ABSTRACT

School climate has a major impact on the school setting. In order to manage climate, it is essential to assess and understand the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents.

This study identified the differences between teachers, students, and parents relative to their perceptions concerning school climate at Suburban High. The instrument was the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire-RS (OCDQ-RS), a revision by Hoy and Clover (1986) of the original OCDQ by Halpin and Croft.

Data were used to develop an action plan for managing school climate at Suburban High. Data gained from this study were utilized to develop a practical plan that helps meet the needs of participants. The study allowed for creating recommendations to better manage the current climate. The findings provided baseline data for engaging in a continuous process of school improvement.

There were 26 statements indicated significant differences between teachers, parents, and students. Data indicated teachers believed administration was more supportive than did parents or students. Students perceived administration as more directive than did teachers and parents. Differences existed between teachers and parents in engaged and frustrated teacher behavior. Teachers perceived more frustrated behavior for themselves while students perceived teachers as engaged. Parents perceived administration as more supportive than did students. Students perceived teachers as more

frustrated than did parents. However, the students also saw teachers as more engaged and intimate than parents.

Teachers with 0-5 years of experience perceived administration as complimenting and helping them. They perceived administration as supportive. Veteran teachers perceived administration as talking more than listening. These teachers perceived administration engaged in directive behavior. Only four statements indicated differences between teachers based on years of experience.

Parents who had more than three children attend Suburban High perceived teacher behavior to be frustrated more than did parents who had one child attend. These parents also perceived teacher behavior as more intimate. They perceived administration as directive in their behavior. Parents with only one child who has attended perceived the administration as supportive and that teachers were more engaged. They also believed that teachers were friendly with students more than parents who had three or more children attend. Differences between parents were minimal.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Measuring school climate can help us understand what was and what is, so that we can move forward to what could be” (Freiberg, 1996, p. 26).

I have been in the field of education for 10 years. It has been obvious each school I worked in had its own climate. Many things have changed in the last 10 years. A number of initiatives have come and gone. Within my first year as a teacher, No Child Left Behind was introduced and accountability has been a significant topic in schools. Technology has emerged as a supplement to an ingrained aspect of a research-based curriculum. Finally, formative assessments such as the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) have become the foundation for data-driven decision making in schools. One constant that has remained is school climate impacts the success of an organization (Cohen, 2006).

While working as a first-year teacher, a toxic environment was present in the high school. Trust and openness were not valued and creativity was often looked at negatively. When I changed organizations, I found out what a healthy climate looks and feels like. I realized each school had a unique personality. The new district had a culture that was strong and rooted in tradition, but each school had a different climate. The principal in the building I worked at paid careful attention to ongoing management and development of the school's climate. The visibility of the principal was evident as

she greeted both students and staff at the door each day. The year before I arrived, the principal, along with her staff, engaged teachers, students, and parents in a climate study (Fall of 1999). The results proved disappointing as they showed that teachers, students, and parents overwhelmingly felt disconnected from the school. Teacher morale was low and frustration was high. Parents perceived there was a lack of communication.

An action plan was developed from the data to help address deficient areas. Student celebrations were held every month and all students were honored in some way. Parents were invited to the building on a regular basis to voice concerns and share ideas. Teachers had additional prep time added to their schedule. Each of these changes had an impact on the climate in a positive way. In this building, climate was managed on a daily basis. A healthy environment was created that promoted student achievement and teacher productivity. Due to declining enrollment, I was transferred to another school in the district. The atmosphere of the school was uneasy. It was evident the climate was not healthy or conducive for student achievement. During this time, I began a master's degree program in educational leadership. To complete my degree, I designed a study to determine perceptions of teachers, students, and parents. This study determined significant differences existed among the three groups. These were given to the principal and superintendent for review. At this same time, I accepted another job as a principal in another district. The administration did not address the concerns raised by the study and the traditions of the past remained in place. I promised myself no matter what I did for the rest of my career; I would never disregard the importance of creating and maintaining a positive school climate.

When I accepted my first administrative job as a principal, the first order of business was to diagnose the climate of the school. I utilized the *Expectation Diagnosis* (Bulach, 1998). From these preliminary data, teachers were engaged in a conversation about climate. A School Climate Team charged to act as manager of the school's climate was implemented. The committee met on a weekly basis and worked at creating an atmosphere where teachers, students, and parents felt comfortable. Over the course of 2 years, strides were made to improve the climate within the school and the district. A Christmas party for district employees was held for the first time in 10 years and had over 90% attendance. An end-of-the-year celebration for student achievement was held with the public invited to attend. Every student received an award of some kind. Grandparents were invited to come to the school for Grandparents Day. Parents were invited on a variety of other days to honor both them and their children. Teams were developed to address concerns of teachers, students, and parents. Going into the third year as principal, plans for an-depth climate study were put into place. However, an opportunity for an administrative position presented itself in another district. I accepted a job as an assistant principal and I am currently in that position.

In my new position, problems with teacher morale exist district-wide. Students are disconnected from the school. Parents perceive their voices are ignored. In order to address these concerns, it was decided to assess the climate of the school. The local education association asked for a survey to be utilized for all staff throughout the district. Conversations were held between the education association and district administration. From these conversations, it was decided to put out bids for a survey to measure morale district-wide. The two sides decided to utilize a survey and develop action plans at

individual buildings throughout the district. This process is ongoing and it appears the survey will not be utilized until the fall of 2009. The administration at the high school decided to attack the issues. An assessment of school climate was done at Suburban High prior to the district-wide survey. The data from the high school survey helped participants understand the climate of Suburban High. An action plan is being developed in order to make school climate a positive asset for the school community.

Many factors influence whether a school system is successful. Successful schools share strong values that support a safe environment, high expectations for all participants, belief in basic skills instruction, and strong leadership (Deal & Peterson, 1999a). School climate has an impact on morale, achievement, and motivation. Climate is one constant of all school systems. It is an enduring characteristic (Breunlin, Cimmarusti, Dunne, Kelly, & Mann, 2005; Freiberg, 1999a). Not only does climate influence many things, but it is also influenced in a variety of ways. Climate factors can be changed by students, teachers and schools (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999).

As administration focuses on climate, they must understand perception is often reality. Perceptions must be taken seriously. Teachers, students, parents, and administrators may have different perceptions about the climate of their school. This causes problems for researchers looking for just one climate indicator. However, it does not cause trouble for researchers using a definition of climate where different perceptions can coexist (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999). These different perceptions must be understood in order to create a supportive environment. Teachers establish the climate for their classroom. The administration plays a role in establishing the climate for the school. The actions of teachers and administration will lead to a better understanding of the

climate of an organization (Hall & George, 1999). Differences of perceptions must be understood. These differences make it difficult to create an instrument that truly captures the perceptions of participants. The problem with perceptions is they also play a role with students. One problem in studying school climate is that you can never be sure how a student's background works with or against other school variables (Anderson, 1982).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of school climate began with Perry (1908) when he talked about pride in a school. School spirit may be developed by teachers focusing on examples of loyalty, celebrations of special days, school athletics, and enthusiastic alumni. Pride in the school and honor for its name takes time to develop (Perry, 1908). This pride he wrote about was the spirit of a school is school climate. The understanding of school climate was extended by Halpin and Croft (1963). Halpin and Croft began the formal discussion on school climate. They considered climate to be composed of a wide array of factors ranging from socio-economic status, parental attitudes, district policies, and location. They also looked at responses from elementary teachers. They identified eight dimension of study. Four of the areas focused on teachers while the other four dealt with administration. Hoy and Clover (1986) added much research in the area of school climate.

Many definitions of school climate exist. School climate is a stable set of organizational characteristics that capture the distinctive tone or atmosphere of a school; climate is to organization as personality is to the individual (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; Keefe, Kelley, & Miller, 1985). Another definition explains that school climate is about

that quality of a school that helps each individual feel personal worth, while helping create a sense of belonging (Freiberg, 1999a).

Parents, teachers, principals, and students have always sensed something special about their schools. It is a special sense that is difficult to describe (Deal & Peterson, 1999a; Sweeny, 1992). Sweeny (1992) wrote that, “climate of a school reflects the feel or shared meanings of people who work and learn within” (p. 70). These shared meanings are reflected in key beliefs and values that influence the behavior of those who hold them.

School climate affects many aspects of a school system. There is evidence indicating that school climate is linked to student achievement (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; Sweeney, 1992). Even though there are no statistics that specifically state how pupils are affected academically by climate, it is clear it has an affect on students. Students are influenced by their surroundings, and it becomes the school’s responsibility to do more than just educate (Perry, 1908). School climate can define the quality of a school that creates healthy learning places which allow participants to express themselves and develop their creative spirit (Freiberg, 1999a).

Halpin and Croft (1963) developed a school climate assessment called the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ). The OCDQ allowed schools to quickly assess their climate in a manner that allowed for prompt feedback. It was not necessary to have an in-depth knowledge of the instrument or the topic. Halpin and Croft (1963) analyzed data from 71 elementary schools. The original version of the OCDQ had eight focus areas. The focus areas that explored teacher behavior were hindrance, intimacy, disengagement, and Espirit. Hindrance referred to unnecessary work that did

not allow teachers to do their job efficiently. Intimacy dealt with the relationships teachers had with one another outside of school. Disengagement referred to a lack of connection to teaching. Espirit was linked to morale. The focus areas that explored principal behavior were production emphasis, aloofness, consideration, and thrust. Production emphasis refers to directive behavior of a principal. Aloofness is linked to behavior that is not personable or connected. Consideration is a variable where the principal genuinely cares for teachers. Thrust refers to the principal working hard and setting a good example in order to move the school in a positive direction (Halpin & Croft, 1963).

The climate of a school fell on a continuum between open and closed. The categories were closed, paternal, familiar, controlled, autonomous, and open. An open climate was friendly and supportive while the closed climate had a high level of aloofness where collaboration was not valued. The open climate was full of engagement while the closed climate burdened teachers with unnecessary work. Relationships in an open climate were valued while the closed climate created teachers that felt burdened by their leader. A closed climate promoted distrust while the open climate made trust a valued belief. An autonomous climate was goal-oriented, but had little intimacy. The paternal climate was characterized by the principal trying to satisfy needs, but accomplishing very little. The familiar climate saw the principal get along with their staff well. The controlled climate emphasized goals, but cared little for individual needs (Halpin & Croft, 1963; Kalis, 1980).

The OCDQ has been criticized for its inability to be utilized in urban and secondary schools. The original statements in OCDQ failed to address the needs of the

changing face of education (Bliss, Hoy, & Tarter, 1989). Due to the problems in the OCDQ, a new group of researchers revised the document to assess the secondary level. Hoy and Clover (1986) revised the original version of the OCDQ. The revised version, Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS), is based on the original Halpin and Croft measure (Bliss et al., 1990). The development of an OCDQ for secondary schools had several phases—generating items, selecting a sample of schools, reducing items, refining subtests, and conducting a check of the instrument to determine its stability (Hoy, Kottkamp, & Mulhern, 1987). The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS) is a 34-item instrument that measures aspects of school climate. All items are simple descriptive statements (Bliss et al., 1989).

Hoy, Kottkamp, and Tarter (1991) have made sure the OCDQ-RS has no copyright when being utilized for noncommercial use. This allows for an inexpensive approach to assessing school climate. It can be given in a relatively short time which allows for prompt and specific feedback to participants. It allows for comparison to other schools which provides participants with a frame of reference. It provides data on a variety of areas which helps give an accurate profile of a school. Overall, the OCDQ-RS gives schools an efficient and inexpensive tool to assess school climate.

Statement of the Problem

Climate has an impact on people. In order to manage a school's climate, it is essential to assess and understand the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents (Cohen, 2007). It is vital that administration utilize data to prepare them to work with

their school climate. This study will determine the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents relative to school climate at Suburban High.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine teacher, parent, and student perceptions of the school climate at Suburban High. Data were used to evaluate, understand, and develop an action plan for managing school climate at Suburban High. Differences in the perceptions of participants regarding the climate of Suburban High were examined. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High?
2. What are the differences among the teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High?
3. What are the differences in perceptions regarding school climate by teachers, based on years of experience?
4. What are the differences in perceptions between parents based on the number of their children who have attended Suburban High?

Significance of the Study

This study determined if differences existed between teachers, parents, and students regarding school climate at Suburban High. This study is important for three reasons. First of all, this study engaged participants in self-reflection about the current state of affairs at Suburban High. The study provided data for the creation of recommendations to better manage the current climate of the school within the

framework of the current culture. Finally, the findings provided baseline data for the high school to engage in a process of continuous school improvement.

Delimitations

The following delimitations applied to this study:

1. The data collected came from only one survey instrument (OCDQ-RS).
2. The study reflected the time period in which it was given.
3. The OCDQ-RS was designed for administration and teachers and not specifically for students and parents.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the study:

1. Perceptions of teachers, parents, and student who took part in the study were representative of the population served by Suburban High.
2. Respondents answered the survey honestly and accurately.
3. The survey was valid and reliable means to assess teacher, parent, and student perceptions about the climate of Suburban High.

Definitions of Terms

Espirit: Teachers are enjoying their work and have a sense of accomplishment (Anderson, 1908).

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): A standardized assessment that measures academic growth in language arts, reading, and math.

Morale: Morale is the mental or emotional attitude of teachers toward elements of their job (Kalis, 1980).

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP): National organization for secondary school principals (Breaking Ranks I, 2004).

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ): Original school climate instrument designed by Halpin and Croft to assess the climate of an organization (Halpin & Croft, 1963).

Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire—Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS): Revised version of the OCDQ that helped better meet the needs of secondary schools (Hoy & Clover, 1986).

Parent Portal: Suburban High technology that is part of the school information system (SIS). It allows parents access to their child's grades, attendance, and lunch account information.

Participants: Teachers, parents, and students who participated in the survey.

Perceptions: Refers to the views of parents, students, and teachers.

Principal: Refers to either the head principal or assistant principal in the 10th-12th grades.

School climate: Perceptions held by teachers, parents, and students as to the nature of the organization, but also by how those perceptions are developed, communicated, and transmitted (Owens, 2001).

School culture: Deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of a school's history (Deal & Peterson, 1998).

Stakeholders: External members of the school community.

Teachers: Refers to all teachers currently employed at Suburban High.

Thrust: Refers to principal setting a good example (Halpin & Croft, 1963).

Chapter II provides a review of the literature as it pertains to school climate. The chapter includes definitions of climate and culture. A section of the chapter discusses similarities and differences between culture and climate. The various assessments of school climate are introduced and discussed in relationship to their formation and utilization in the academic world. The role of school leaders in the formation of climate is discussed. The elements of a positive school climate are examined. School climate and its effect on school factors are discussed. Finally, the process for developing a positive school climate is introduced.

Chapter III presents the methods and designs of the research. Chapter III includes a description of the subjects, the survey instrument, and how the data were collected.

Chapter IV reports on data which pertaining to the research questions presented in Chapters I and III. In order to determine whether there are differences in perceptions, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. The differences were based on the demographic variables of years of experience and number of children who have attended Suburban High.

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for this study. These are based on analysis and discussion of the data presented in the chapter.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II provides a review of the literature as it pertains to school climate. The chapter includes definitions of climate and culture. The definitions are followed by a section of the chapter that discusses similarities and differences between culture and climate. The various assessments of school climate are introduced and discussed in relationship to their formation and utilization in the academic world. The role of leaders in the formation of climate is discussed. The elements of a positive school climate are examined. School climate and its effect on school factors are discussed. Finally, the process for developing a positive school climate was introduced.

Definitions of Climate

Experts agree there is a crisis in United States high schools (NASSP, 2004). What is taught is often not as important as the environment in which learning takes place (Breunlin et al., 2005). Schools have personalities. In some schools, the teachers and students work together in a spirit of harmony. Other schools are fragmented without common goals (Keefe et al., 1985).

School climate research owes much to earlier work on organizational climate in both business and to later work on classroom climate (Anderson, 1982). In the early 1900s, Perry (1908) recognized one of the most important ideals in school is that of *esprit de corps*. This refers to teachers enjoying their work. School climate is an enduring

quality of the entire school that affects attitudes and behavior (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). It can play an important role in creating a healthy atmosphere. It can also provide an environment that produces both personal and academic growth (Marshall, 2001). "Anyone who visits more than a few schools notes quickly how schools differ from one another in their feel" (Halpin, 1966, p. 131). School climate has multiple aspects that include organization and environmental elements (Freiberg, 1999a). Most measures of climate are linked to cultural and social dimensions (Hoy et al., 1987).

There are multiple definitions of school climate. These definitions share similar characteristics. School climate is a snapshot of the school at a given time. The picture simply describes what exists (Bliss, Hoffman, Hoy, & Sabo, 1996). Climate is a stable set of characteristics that capture the tone of a school. Climate is like the personality of an individual. It is a general concept that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of its members (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000; Hoy & Tarter, 1992; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Bliss et al., 1996). Climate reflects the feel or shared meanings of people who work within an organization (Sweeney, 1992). Another definition is the characteristics of a school building (Owens, 2001). Hoy and Miskel (1996) believed that school climate is a quality of the entire school that is experienced by participants which affects attitudes and behavior.

Culture

Climate and culture have often been used synonymously with one another. It is clear both concepts play an important role in the success of an organization. Adding culture to the discussion of school climate only made understanding more difficult. There is no general agreement on the difference between culture and climate (Bliss et al.,

1989). Culture and climate are both influenced by interaction with tangible and intangible forces (Owens, 2001). Healthy school cultures and climates are linked to higher student achievement and motivation (Stolp, 1994).

What exists in the present is directly related to what has occurred in the past. Therefore, any discussion on climate must include a look at culture. The idea of school culture emerged from the corporate world with the idea that culture would create a stable learning environment (Stolp, 1994). Organizational culture is the body of solutions to problems that has worked consistently for a group. It is the correct way to perceive, think about, and feel in relation to those problems (Owens, 2001). Culture refers to the values, belief systems, norms, and ways of thinking that are characteristic of the people in an organization. School culture is a system of basic assumptions (Maslowski, 2006). Culture has no single dominant point, but rather is a rich blend of ideas (Ouchi & Wiens, 1985).

A strong culture reaps rewards for an organization. School culture can affect a student's feeling of belonging (Stewart, 2007). Strong cultures are able to adapt to change. When people are vested in their work, they take pride in their work. Employees are committed. Their hearts are engaged in the mission (Deal & Kennedy, 1999). People do matter and culture plays a role in holding people together and giving their efforts meaning. Everyone has a chance to be successful (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Ramsey, 2008).

A negative culture can tear apart an organization. A negative culture has characteristics such as focus on negative values, destructive behavior, and a fractured spirit (Deal & Peterson, 1999a). Unrelenting reform, rapid change, or benign neglect can

quickly undermine cultural tradition. The result can be damaging. It can create a stagnant school that people tolerate because it does no harm, but it does little good. A school can grow toxic over time. Problems in motivation, commitment, and loyalty are displayed by all stakeholder groups. The difficulties of managing organizations with a toxic culture have been well documented and widely recognized (Deal & Peterson, 1999a).

A characteristic of top-performing companies is a strong identity consistent with the demands of the business environment and human needs. Productivity is related to the culture of an organization (Deal & Peterson, 1999a). Even highly educated professionals bring their needs with them when they come to work. They need to feel safe and appreciated. By knowing what is expected of them, employees will understand how to act in a given situation (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Culture patterns are highly enduring, have a powerful impact on performance, and shape the ways people think, act, and feel (Deal & Peterson, 1999a). A school must have a positive culture if it is to have a healthy climate. A school's culture is a process, not a product. The best you can hope for is to foster a culture that accepts and adjusts to change, (Ramsey, 2008).

Differences in Climate and Culture

There are a variety of differences between climate and culture. Rousseau (1990) believed climate included descriptive beliefs and perceptions while culture was shared values and expectations. Hoy, Kottkamp, and Tarter (1991) believe climate is shared perceptions while culture is shared assumptions. Climate has its roots in psychology while culture is grounded in sociology. Climate identifies perceptions of behavior while culture examines assumptions and ideology. Climate is a concrete topic while culture

tends to be more abstract. Climate is analyzed by using multivariate statistics and culture has a linguistic analysis. Finally, researchers study climate to determine strategies for change. On the other hand, researchers focus on culture when they want to examine the climate of the organization.

There are many approaches to understanding climate and culture. These approaches represent a major difference between the two concepts. Culture can be approached in a geospatial manner where the physical landscape of a building is studied. It can also be looked at from the perspective of tradition within an organization. Behavioral patterns are consistent over time and can easily be studied. The final approach, in relationship to culture, examines values. These may be written out or implied. Climate can be examined from a variety of perspectives. Climate focuses on patterns of behavior that are easily observed. Perceived climate analyzes how life does function and how it should function. The psychological or felt climate focuses on how people feel about their organization. These approaches clearly separate the techniques utilized to study these important, yet very different concepts (Hoy, Kottkamp, & Tarter, 1991, p. 6).

The method of instrumentation for assessing climate and culture is different. School culture studies have typically used ethnographic methods and participant observation methods to gather information (Kratochwill & Roach, 2004). Schein (1999) believes culture cannot be measured in a quantitative manner. This takes a great deal of time and can be expensive. The researcher can have a major impact on the results of the assessment. When it comes to school climate, survey instruments are the norm. They are

easy to use and often provide timely feedback. However, perceptual data can be tough to rely on due to individual differences and an individual's needs (Anderson, 1982).

Elements of a Positive Climate

Too often, school climate is ignored until it becomes foul. It can become a positive influence or a significant barrier to learning (Freiberg, 1999b). Healthy schools are good places. People like each other and their schools. Trust, commitment, cooperation, loyalty, and teamwork are the values of healthy schools (Hoy & Tarter, 1992). The importance of positive relationships in an organization is not new. A healthy school has positive interrelationships between students and adults within the organization. Teachers like their peers, students have respect for one another, and the administration has open lines of communication. An unhealthy school is a place where participants are forced to do things rather than want to do things (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). A healthy school has a principal who is a dynamic leader, teachers who are committed to learning, and students who are motivated. An unhealthy school has no effective principal, aloof teachers, and students who are viewed as threats (Hoy & Tarter, 1992). Hoy and Tarter (1992) believed a healthy school is one in which the teachers, administrators, and the board are in harmony, and the school meets both its organizational and people needs.

When discussing climate, the principal plays a major role. Great principals find ways to make their staff feel special each and every day. They know they must market and promote their teachers (Vail, 2005). Stability is also important. Schools that experience frequent turnover in administration were characterized by less order and more issues of discipline. There was also less parent and students consensus regarding the

school environment (Griffith, 1999). “Who a principal is—what he or she does, attends to, or seems to appreciate—is constantly watched by students, teachers, parents, and members of the community” (Deal & Peterson, 1999b, p. 20). To fight negativity, a principal must confront negative behavior head on, focus on finding the right people to hire, celebrate the positive, develop new norms, and develop new stories of success (Deal & Peterson, 1999b). Open principal behavior is reflected in relationships with teachers where the principal creates an environment that is supportive and encourages teacher participation and contribution. Relationships are authentic. Trivial matters are not dealt with by teachers. Teacher initiative is encouraged (Bliss et al., 1989; Hoy et al., 1987; Keefe et al., 1985).

Research demonstrates a principal’s perceptions of the health or climate of the school are frequently different than the perceptions of teachers (Bliss, Hoy, & Tarter, 1990). To discover such a difference is not to uncover a problem but rather a symptom (Bliss et al., 1990). A principal must be able to read and shape the climate of a school. To do this, a principal must understand the present climate, identify values, work with all the participants, encourage initiative, confront resistance, encourage school ceremonies, and know what is going on in your school (Deal & Peterson, 1999b; Hoy & Sweetland, 2000). A principal must investigate its climate to truly understand it. To do this, a principal must manage by walking around, observe classes often, listen more than talk, and ask people what they think (Ramsey, 2008). A leader who strives for a positive school climate and encourages teachers is on the road to success. Principals must make sure all teachers are included in the improvement process. Meaningful improvement

takes commitment and patience. There is no definite timeline for improvement (Stevens, 1990).

A theme related to organizations has been the importance of trust in developing productive relationships. Trust can be defined as one's ability to believe another person will act in their best interest (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk, 2006). It is the glue that holds the school together (Sweeney, 1992). Trust in the principal is related to supportive behavior and this goes along with the values of consideration and integrity (Bliss et al., 1989). Trust is associated with confidence and optimism. Organizational climate and trust are not identical, but they are related. Trust encourages creativity and expression (Bliss et al., 1989). Teachers trust in parents and students is related to student achievement (Hoy et al., 2006).

A healthy atmosphere produces a positive climate. The engaged climate is one where the teachers work together to accomplish their goals; they are committed to their students; and they cooperate with one another. Interactions are true. Lines of communication are based on honesty. Closed climates are full of suspicions and communication is a liability (Bliss et al., 1996). Open climates are those in which there is reality-centered leadership of the principal, committed teachers, and no need for burdensome paperwork, close supervision, or a plethora of rules and regulations. Behavior of the principal and the teachers is authentic. Everyone is responsible for the development of an open climate (Bliss et al., 1990; Owens, 2001; Pasi, 2001).

There are many elements that make up the climate of a school. These elements are found within the traditional setting of a school. Climate is linked to leadership, trust,

and overall health. A school with a positive climate and a corresponding focus on realistic student achievement is a successful school (Hoy & Tarter, 1992).

The Effects of School Climate

People need to understand climate, the effect it has, and what can be done to improve it (Sweeney, 1992). Positive school climate can be described as a tenuous relationship between students, teachers, parents, and administrators (Witcher, 1993). The most dominant theme in good feelings stories were things like achievement, recognition for performance, satisfactions intrinsic to the work, responsibility, advancement, collegiality, rigorous curriculum, and learning. A positive environment enhances the school experience (Bolman & Deal, 1984; Manning & Saddlemire, 1996; Witcher, 1993). School climate, like many other educational issues, is multi-dimensional. Numerous elements must be understood in order to manage school climate. This list includes the number of quality interactions between students and adults; students and teacher perceptions of their school environment, environmental factors such as class size, feelings of safety, and family-student interactions. These interactions can create a network of support that allows all participants to learn at the highest of levels (Freiberg, 1998; Marshall, 2001).

School climate may be one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program. Without a climate that creates a harmonious and well-functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1985). When the climate is right, people are inspired to do their best. Teachers and students do what needs to be done to stimulate learning (Sweeney, 1998). Focusing on positive school climate has become a cornerstone of sound educational practice. School

climate is regarded as a specific means towards high student achievement (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Erpelding, 1999; Hirase, 2000; Hoy et al., 1991; Keefe et al., 1985; West, 1985). “Three organizational properties seem to make a difference in student achievement: the academic emphasis of the school, the collective efficacy of the teachers, and the teachers’ trust in parents and students” (Hoy et al., 2006, p. 426). Bulach, Malone, and Castleman (1994), in their research on 20 schools, found a significant difference in student achievement between schools with a good school climate and those with a poor school climate. Unless students experience a positive and supportive climate, some may never achieve even the most minimum of standards (Urban, 1999).

Along with higher achievement, school climate has been linked to fewer discipline problems with students. A student’ behavior in a school is affected by social and cultural characteristics of a school (West, 1985). A positive school climate has been associated with fewer behavioral and emotional problems for students (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997). School climate can predict disciplinary problems, success in interventions, and academic achievement. A positive school climate fosters development and learning that is necessary for teaching students how to become productive members of society (Cohen, 2006). Haynes, Emmons, and Comer (1993) and Kuperminc et al. (1997) believe school climate perceptions are protective factors for boys and may supply high-risk students with a supportive learning environment yielding healthy development. Both educators and learners benefit as secondary schools develop into places of trust, respect, belongingness, mutual obligation, and duty (Manning & Saddlemire, 1996). Students who perceived they had less say in decisions made in the

classroom also reported an increase in behavioral problems and depressive symptoms. When rules are clear and consistent, students perceived that there were less behavior problems and depressive symptoms declined (Reddy, Rhodes, & Way, 2007).

The climate of a school also has an effect on the teachers in a school system. Peterson (1999) believed schools with a negative climate showed a spirit of helplessness and despair. Motivation was destroyed and learning decreases. Collegiality failed to exist. Hirase (2000) found that teachers have a greater sense of work efficacy in schools where there is a good climate. A positive climate is important for the success and commitment to new programs (Gregory, Henry, & Schoeny, 2007). According to Tashakkori and Taylor (1995), a positive school climate is associated with increased job satisfaction for school personnel. Staff and administrators in a positive climate feel as if they can achieve their goals (Cromwell, 2002). Large schools appear to promote negative teacher perceptions of school administration and low staff morale. People in small schools and units come to know and care about one another to a much greater degree than is possible in large schools. Larger schools tend to have a less positive climate (Cotton, 1996; Sweeney, 1992). Climate has an effect on morale, but this is not always easy to figure out (Vail, 2005).

Kalis (1980) believed morale is the mental or emotional attitude of teachers toward elements of their job. Newer teachers seemed to be more concerned about what others, especially administrators, think about their performance. Veteran teachers were not as concerned about what others thought. There seems to be a general increase in negative perceptions and feelings with the increase in teaching experience (Kalis, 1980).

Whether it is academic achievement or teacher morale, climate impacts everything in a school. Understanding the impact can help schools make climate a positive aspect of their culture. People in an organization where the climate is positive work together in an effort to achieve the goals set forth by the organization (Cohen, 2007).

Assessment and Instrumentation

Attempts have been made to define climate in terms of easily measurable attributes such as size and structure (Anderson, 1982). Shared perception is the general agreement by participants of what is important and this perception shapes school climate (Keefe et al., 1985). "School climate assessment has the potential not only to support understanding about what our school's strengths and challenges are but also to promote student voice, foster community building, and build a foundation for evidence-based action planning to take place" (Cohen et al., 2006, p. 31).

Changing your climate starts with a vision of what you want your school to look like. Strong schools have a sense of their mission (Freiberg, 1999a; Lambert, 1988). All participants must share the vision of an organization. If this vision is shared, it allows a school to create and sustain a climate that helps promote the highest level of achievement (Sweeney, 1992). Assessment of school climate is important to the improvement of the school environment (Keefe et al., 1985). When studying climate, the problem rests with what variables to study and how to measure them. The validity of participant perceptions as a measure of school climate is a concern (Anderson, 1982). School climate measures have evolved from surveys to interviews, focus groups, open-ended findings which have allowed for the triangulation of data (Freiberg, 1999a). There are two measures of school

climate—direct and indirect. Direct involves interaction with others to get data. Indirect measures do not insert the data collector in the process (Freiberg, 1996).

There are certain guidelines to consider when assessing a school's climate. One must understand what questions need to be answered. Multiple assessments need to be utilized (Kratochwill & Roach, 1992). School climate is a complex topic, and this causes the management or a change in climate to be difficult. Climate studies have traditionally used surveys to find out about the perceptions of participants (Cohen, 2006; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Owens, 2001). Climate questions are often concerned with the goals and expectations of the school (Keefe et al., 1985).

Research has shown that elementary, middle, and secondary schools are different. The setting, curriculum, and expectations vary by level. Therefore, different measures are necessary for assessing the climate of a school (Bliss et al., 1996).

For example, the OCDQ-RM is a 50-item questionnaire that measures six dimensions of the openness of middle schools. The OHI-RM is a 45-item questionnaire that measures six dimensions of middle school health (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000).

The Organizational Health Inventory (OHI) is a 44-item questionnaire consists of seven dimensions that focus on responsibility and control at the secondary level (Bliss et al., 1990; Hoy & Tarter, 1992). The OHI is built on a strong conceptual foundation. It is reasonable to hypothesize the OHI will be a good predictor of outcome variables (Bliss et al., 1990). The OHI measures important variables that related to teacher and student performance (Hoy & Tarter, 1992).

Halawah (1995) discussed the Evaluation of School Climate assessment. It was designed to assess secondary students and their perceptions of school climate. It had 42 items with eight categories. The survey is reliable and had an alpha level of .85.

The Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) was developed in 1982 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. It consists of 55 items and assesses 10 elements of school climate. The CASE measures the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students. Reliability is adequate, but validity is questionable at best (Breunlin, Cimmarusti, Dunne, Kelly, & Mann, 2005; Kratochwill & Roach, 2004).

The School Climate Survey has seven dimensions and addresses a variety of areas such as achievement, fairness, involvement, sharing of resources, discipline, and relationships. It is designed to gather data from students (Haynes, Emmons, & Comer, 1993).

The Charles F. Kettering Ltd. School Climate Profile (1974) is used to measure school climate and has four sections with eight subscales that refer to respect, trust, morale, opportunity for input, renewal, caring, and cohesiveness (Marshall, 2001). This survey has four sections and is given to students, administrators, and teachers. The four sections are general climate factors, program determinants, process determinants, and material process. It helps provide a foundation on which schools can measure climate changes (Johnson & Johnson, 1997; Witcher, 1993).

The Tennessee School Climate Inventory (1991) has 49 statements with seven scales. It is quantitative in nature. The seven scales are order, leadership, collaboration, expectations, environment, involvement, and instruction (Butler & Rakow, 1995).

There are a multitude of instruments that can be utilized to assess climate. Each of the instruments described in this chapter have strengths and weaknesses. They vary in areas of measurement and size. The reliability and validity of the assessments are strong. When choosing the instrument, a researcher must find the best fit. A school must choose the instrument that best meets its needs. The OCDQ-RS is valid and reliable and best meets the needs of secondary schools. It utilizes simple statements and can be completed in ten minutes. There is no cost. It is easily scored and results can be compared to similar schools (Hoy & Tarter, 1997).

Developing a Positive Climate

Improving school climate is an ongoing process. "Moving forward requires some sign posts along the way and measuring school climate must be one of the beacons of educational reform" (Freiberg, 1999a, p. 218). All organizations must solve basic problems. They must deal with their environment, meet their goals, maintain unity, and develop a purposeful value system. Teachers, administrators, and the board are truly responsible for working with these problems (Hoy & Tarter, 1992). The difficulties of managing an organization lies in the fact that it does not change when you want it to, yet it changes rapidly when we wish it would not (Bolman & Deal, 1984). A variety of factors influence school climate. They include, but are not limited to, interactions between students and adults, perceptions of participants, environmental factors, academic performance, safety, and feelings of trust (Marshall, 2001). To work with a school's climate, a person must identify the values and beliefs of the organization. Only with a sense of what is and what can a school get to what should be (Freiberg, 1999a; Sweeney, 1992). School climate improvement is based on planning, assessing, understanding,

implementing, and re-evaluating. Soliciting feedback from staff is important (Cohen, 2006; Stevens, 1990). School climate strategies need a quick start and should be visible to all the participants. It should be completed in a few months and not over a long period of time (Freiberg, 1999a).

Changing your climate starts with a vision of what you want your school to look like. From there, a mission is established. Strong schools have a sense of their mission. Communication is the next area to focus upon (Peterson, 1998). Continual feedback is necessary for a successful climate. Schools must teach interaction skills. An engaging curriculum must be present (Lambert, 1988). Dumaesq and Blust (1981) believed there are many interventions that an organization can utilize to improve their school climate. A team can be put together to set up procedures and policy related to climate. This team should involve participants from the school community. Performance goals should be set up for teachers and administrators. Norms and values should drive the day-to-day business of the school. Reward more people within the organization. You must get away from tradition at times. Revise the school's grading system so students who put in effort can have success. Interview a group of students who have not had success and see what they have to say. Develop an advisory program so students do not get lost in the mix.

Cohen (2006) believed in order to improve climate, an in-depth process must be utilized. This process consists of five stages: planning, collecting, evaluating, understanding the data, and action planning. This process can be complex or simplified depending on the nature of your organization. Most assessments of climate are more formal in nature. However, this process allows participants to have a say in the development of the organization's climate. It allows for collaboration and fosters the

building of relationships that can help sustain a positive school climate. Overall, a good assessment of school climate will take time, but it is an investment in the future of an organization (Cohen et al., 2006)

Hoy and Tarter (1992) believed a positive organizational climate is crucial for a good school. When looking into improving the climate of a school, there are many interventions a school can utilize. Increased parent and community involvement is one technique. Schools can promote increased parent and community involvement by starting a parent center, a home visit program and set up research teams that examine methods to getting parents involved (Epstein, 1994). Marshall (2001) believed schools with a positive climate are doing the following things: families are allowed to develop relationships with teachers; promote decision-making on issues affecting their child; teachers encourage growth by using their skill set to help parents develop quality parenting skills. Teachers and schools need to increase their understanding and respect for student and family diversity by creating a caring school climate. Letting parents know that they are valued and acknowledging their time constraints are key elements of a positive school climate (Epstein, 1994).

School attachment and attainment were significantly related to academic achievement. Students who feel connected will engage in behavior that is conducive to academic success (Manning & Saddlemire, 1996; Stewart, 2007). In 1996, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) published *Breaking Ranks* which was an effort to create national reform at the secondary level. It contained 82 recommendations for high school reform. One of the key ingredients of the

recommendations was the personalization of the high school experience for students (NASSP, 2004).

In 2004, *Breaking Ranks II* was published. This publication focused on the recommendations from *Breaking Ranks I* that the principal could control. Again, one of the three areas of focus was personalization. One of the strategies included in the recommendations was the development of an advisory program that ensured each student had meaningful contact time with a teacher. Another strategy focused on developing Personalized Education Plans to prepare students for graduation. In each instance, personalization was necessary for student success (NASSP, 2004). *Breaking Ranks II* identified two elements of personalization. The first element was the relationship between students and ideas. It looks at how the student interacts with the curriculum. The second aspect was how students relate to other people in the school setting. Students need a supportive environment to be successful. A school with a personalized learning environment will see higher graduation and achievement rates (NASSP, 2004). Students cannot be taught until they feel their teachers care about them. A caring environment fosters positive student values and a true love of learning. Student effort towards academic achievements is related to school attachment (Bulach et al., 1998; Kohn, 1996; Stewart, 2007).

In schools throughout the country, educators contribute positively to a school's climate when they demonstrate openness, enthusiasm, and understanding toward all students (Communitzis-Page, 1995). These values help create a personalized learning environment. Personalization is the single most important factor that keeps students in school (Shore, 1995). Personalizing learning refers to the structures, policies, and

practices that promote relationships based on mutual respect, trust, collaboration, and support. When personalization exists, a school can go from good to great. A school must value self-esteem, sense of efficacy, trust, and caring (Breunlin et al., 2005; Sweeney, 1992). In order for students to feel connected to their school, there must be positive relationships with teachers and peers, a safe learning environment, a variety of learning opportunities, meaningful learning tasks, and activities that develop problem-solving skills (Breunlin et al., 2005).

Personalization through adopt-a-kid programs, honoring most improved students, and block scheduling are effective ways of improving school climate. Shore (1995) described Huntington Beach which utilized many innovative techniques. They developed an adopt-a-kid program for at-risk students. They started a most-improved student award which recognizes students who often are not the best students. They developed a green ribbon campaign that stressed no tolerance for violence (Shore, 1995). Pasi (2001) believed you should celebrate student accomplishments at all levels. Hire competent and self-motivated teachers to get a jump-start on climate. Encourage innovation by adding new program and changing existing ones. Foster participation where students and staff get involved in numerous issues. Promote respect throughout your personal and private life. By utilizing these tools, a school system can create and maintain a positive school climate. Students benefit from caring educators who respect them as individuals (Urban, 1999). Breunlin et al. (2005) believed personalization is achieved most readily in small school of 500 or fewer students. By creating small learning communities or houses within large high schools, personalization can be accomplished.

Deal (1987) prescribed guidelines to bring about the reshaping of a school's climate. These guidelines are also factors of climate and can be summarized by the theme of visibility. Old practices and other losses need to be buried and commemorated. Meaningless practices and symbols need to be analyzed and revitalized. Emerging visions, dreams, and hopes need to be articulated and celebrated.

Cartwright and D'Orso (1993) studied inner-city principals and came up with some unique methods for managing climate. Reaching out to the community through home visits was encouraged. Communicating with participants, protecting teachers' contact time with students, and understanding the inner workings of teacher unions and the state education lobbyists were made an area of focus. Warger, Eavy, and Associates (2001) examined a school in Coventry, Rhode Island which set up a family center included General Education Degree (GED) classes, parenting workshops, and preschool story hours. The activities included grandparents as caregivers, understanding Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and coffee with the administration. The family center provided a family-friendly climate at the school.

Garmston (1998) suggested groups have characteristics that make them so dysfunctional that attempting to implement change without improving some fundamental qualities is futile. The tipping point for school climate often begins with very small changes. Care about seemingly unimportant matters may seem unnecessary, but it is care which gets results (Perry, 1908). A school with a positive climate is decorated with student work and symbols of the community (Pasi, 2001). Create an entrance in your school so everyone understands the values of your school system. Provide a safe environment for staff and student free of bullying that is based on respect and equal

treatment. Trust, respect, and concern for others' welfare can have positive effects on participants and the overall achievement of the school (Harris & Lowery, 2002; Manning & Saddlemire, 1996; Marshall, 2001; Peterson & Skiba, 2001). Teachers should be allowed to evaluate their administration and have meetings where they can share how things are going and how they can improve their organization (Bulach, Boothe, & Pickett, 1999).

Trust is built when people see administrators are not 'know-it-alls' and are interested in learning from others. Authenticity exists when principals are open and honest with themselves. They must resolve barriers that keep them from revealing themselves to others (Bulach et al., 1999). Paying attention to routines may provide valuable information for the leader of an organization (Stolp, 1994). Principals can follow simple guidelines to respond to the challenges they will face. Principals must open the lines of communication and solicit input from others. Schools that engage in this behavior achieve at higher levels (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Vail, 2005). You have to walk the walk as well as talk the talk if you want your employees to believe you (Deal & Kennedy, 1999). "The principal must establish for himself such a reputation for ability, and especially for just and kindly treatment, that teachers will, when they have an option, choose to work in the school over which he presides" (Perry, 1908, p. 75). Consistency in administration is important. Schools that have principal changes often have less order, lower level of empowerment of participants, and less agreement about the school climate (Griffith, 1999). A healthy climate has a leader who is dynamic at handling both tasks and relationships. Teachers are committed to teaching and learning while setting high, but achievable goals. Students are motivated

and respect one another. They are proud of their school. An unhealthy climate has a leader who provides little direction. Teachers do not feel good about their peers or their jobs. Students are made fun of by their peers and view teachers as a potential threat (Hoy & Tarter, 1992).

Parents have a major impact on their child's achievement at school. Parent involvement in schools and reading achievement is related (West, 1985). Parents influence what a child does, how they act, and what they bring to school. It is clear they affect attachment and commitment (Stewart, 2007). A great school promotes family and closeness to parents and community. Members support and help each other. Developing a sense of family demands active involvement in decision making and in the life of the school (Sweeney, 1992). Teachers trust in students and parents can be promoted through interaction between parents and teachers (Hoy et al., 2006).

Hoy and Tarter (1992) felt all organizations must solve four problems if they are to develop and prosper: They must cope successfully with their environments, attain their goals, maintain solidarity of the work force, and develop a cohesive value system. School climate is a very difficult area for one person to manage. It must be broken down into variables that affect achievement. This includes expectations, instruction, discipline, and safety (Bulach, Malone, & Castleman, 1994). School climate is affected by societal ideologies, beliefs and attitudes, organizational characteristics, and the demographics of individuals within the building (Keefe et al., 1985). Participants of a school district must share one common powerful vision—each student becoming the best she or he can be. Making that vision a reality requires the ability to create and maintain a climate that promotes excellence (Sweeney, 1992).

Keeping a healthy environment may take more effort than improving a toxic climate (Freiberg, 1999a). A major concern with school climate is little attention is paid to it until things are going poorly. Constant attention is needed to ensure that the climate of a school remains positive. Schools must start with a self-assessment in which all participants have input (Breunlin et al., 2005). Too often, procedures and policies are put into place without buy-in from key participants. The challenge is getting these many sub cultures, which exist in schools, to unite to reach a shared vision. Uniting subcultures into a focused entity requires hard work and a dedicated team (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Schools that do not address their school climate on a regular basis have a potentially negative situation on their hands. Therefore, it is vital that students, parents, and teachers understand their climate (Freiberg, 1998). Even the smallest change in a school can become a tipping point for school climate. Making the smallest changes in schools and classrooms can lead to significant improvements in school climate (Freiberg, 1998).

The development of a positive climate takes time. Improving climate is a process (Cohen, 2006). It will take considerable amount of time to change the climate of a school. The most effective change is when all stakeholders model the values and beliefs that are important to the organization (Stolph, 1994). The benefits far outweigh the negatives. "Developing and maintaining a winning climate is a challenging, but extremely rewarding goal for those who want to make a difference" (Sweeney, 1992, p. 69).

This chapter provided a review of the literature as it pertains to school climate. This chapter included definitions of climate and culture. The definitions were followed

by a section of the chapter that discussed the similarities and differences between culture and climate. The various assessments of school climate were introduced. The role a leaders plays in the formation of climate was discussed. The elements of a positive school climate were examined. School climate and its effect on school factors were discussed. Finally, the process for developing a positive school climate was introduced.

Chapter III presents the methods and designs of the research. Chapter III includes a description of the subjects, the survey instrument, and how the data were collected.

Chapter IV reports on data which pertaining to the research questions presented in Chapters I and III. In order to determine whether there are differences in perceptions, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. The differences were based on the demographic variables of years of experience and number of children who have attended Suburban High.

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for this study. These are based on analysis and discussion of the data presented in the chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

Chapter III presents the methods and designs of the research. Chapter III includes a description of the subjects, the survey instrument, and how the data were collected.

Chapter III concludes with a brief summary of the structure of Chapter IV.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students related to school climate at Suburban High. Data were utilized to collect, evaluate, and understand school climate at Suburban High. This study explored if differences existed in the perceptions of participants regarding the climate of Suburban High. The study examined whether there were differences in perceptions for teachers when examining years of experience in the teaching profession. Data were gathered to determine if there are different perceptions among parent participants.

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High?
2. What are the differences among the teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High?

3. What are the differences in perceptions regarding school climate by teachers, based on years of experience?
4. What are the differences in perceptions between parents based on the number of their children who have attended Suburban High?

Populations Studied

Suburban High is a 10-12 high school in a growing urban area in the upper Midwest. The school has an enrollment of 1,310 students in January of 2009.

The populations studied consisted of the following groups:

1. All certified teachers at Suburban High who were under contract at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.
2. Sophomore and Junior students currently attending Suburban High at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.
3. Parents of sophomore and junior students currently attending Suburban High at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.

Survey Instrument

Participants responded to one instrument with two parts. Information requested included years of teaching experience, gender, year in school, and number of children who have attended Suburban High.

The instrument that was completed by participants is the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire-RS (OCDQ-RS), a revision by Hoy and Clover (1986) of the original OCDQ by Halpin and Croft (1963). The instrument is used to determine and express numerically teachers' perceptions of the climate and openness in their schools. The OCDQ-RS is a 34-item instrument that uses a four-point scale of rarely occurs,

sometimes occurs, often occurs, and very frequently occurs to answer statements involving five dimensions of teacher and principal behavior (Appendix A). Each item is given a score to standardize the results: rarely occurs-1, sometimes occurs-2, often occurs-3, and very frequently occurs-4. The reliability for the scales is relatively high: supportive (.91), directive (.87), engaged (.85), frustrated (.85), and intimate (.71). The construct and predictive validity of the concept of organizational climate were supported through various other studies. Means and standard deviations were calculated from the original sample: Supportive behavior had a mean of 18.19 and standard deviation of 2.66. A higher mean is desirable as that says administration is supportive. Directive behavior had a mean of 13.96 and a standard deviation of 2.49. For directive administrative behavior, a school wants a lower mean to show less directive behavior. Engaged behavior had a mean of 26.45 and a standard deviation of 1.32. A school wants a high level of teacher engagement so a high mean is linked to a positive climate. Frustrated behavior had a mean of 12.33 and a standard deviation of 1.98. A low mean is wanted for frustrated teacher behavior. Finally, intimate behavior had a mean of 8.80 and a standard deviation of .92. Intimate teacher behavior is a desired trait and a high mean is positive (Hoy, Kottkamp, & Tarter, 1991). Approval for the use of the survey was granted in March of 2008 (Appendix B).

Table 1 identifies the reliability of the original five dimensions of the OCDQ-RS. It also identifies the reliability of the results from Suburban High.

Results indicated that reliability of the Suburban High study was strong when compared to the original OCDQ-RS. Intimate teacher behavior had a reliability of .67 which was comparable to the reliability of the original OCDQ-RS of .71. Frustrated

teacher behavior had a reliability of .72 while the OCDQ-RS was .85. Engaged teacher behavior had a reliability of .80 which was close to the original OCDQ-RS reliability of .85. For directive administrative behavior, the Suburban High study had a reliability of .66 while the normative sample had a reliability of .87. Finally, supportive administrative behavior had a reliability of .85 while the original OCDQ-RS was .91. Overall, the reliability of the Suburban High study was strong.

Table 1: Comparison of Reliability of the Five Dimensions of the OCDQ-RS and Suburban High Results.

Dimension	Number of Statements	Reliability	Suburban High Reliability
Intimate Behavior	4	.71	.67
Frustrated Behavior	6	.85	.72
Engaged Behavior	10	.85	.80
Directive Behavior	7	.87	.66
Supportive Behavior	7	.91	.85

The OCDQ-RS has five dimensions: Two dimensions describe principal behavior, and the other three describe teacher behavior. The OCDQ-RS is a refinement of the OCDQ, which was developed through a perspective of teacher-teacher and teacher-principal interaction. The OCDQ-RS was designed specifically for secondary schools. Items from the original OCDQ were revised or eliminated for three reasons. The item was not appropriate for the secondary level. The question was not consistent with the subtest they were placed in. Finally, they had poor measurement characteristics. It measures two dimensions of leadership of the administration—supportive and directive behavior. It measures three dimensions of teacher interactions—engaged, frustrated, and intimate behavior. These five dimensions form two types of climate—openness and intimacy. The properties of the five subtests of the OCDQ-RS are strong. All scales

have high reliability coefficients. The stability of factor structures in two samples demonstrates construct validity. The unit of analysis was the school which links the five dimensions to organizational properties (Bliss et al., 1990; Hoy, Kottkamp, & Tarter, 1991).

Hoy and Clover (1986) identified five dimensions of climate. When looking at principal behavior, two dimensions were identified. The first dimension was supportive principal behavior. Hoy and Tarter (1997) described the various behaviors. The principal is seen as having genuine concern for teachers and attempts to motivate by setting a positive example. "The principal sets an example by working hard" is one example of statement that measures this dimension. Supportive behavior involves the principal using constructive criticism when supervising teachers. Directive principal behavior is rigid. The principal maintains control over teachers and activities. "The principal monitors everything teachers do" is an example of a statement that measures this dimension. This type of behavior is comparable to a dictator .

When referring to teacher behavior, there are three dimensions included in the OCDQ-RS. Engaged teacher behavior is displayed through teachers' pride in their school. "Teachers are friendly with students" is an example of this dimension. Engaged teachers support one another and are committed to all students growing as individuals. Frustrated teacher behavior is identified as teachers who feel burdened by tasks other than teaching. "Assigned non-teaching duties are excessive" is one statement that demonstrates this dimension. Teachers often feel paperwork is excessive. Intimate teacher behavior reflects a strong social connection among teachers. "Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis" is an example of a statement in this dimension.

Cohesion among faculty is common in schools that demonstrate intimate teacher behavior (Hoy & Tarter, 1997).

Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was granted by the Institutional Review Board at the University of North Dakota in December of 2009. The study was conducted in January of 2009. The survey was administered electronically through Survey Monkey.

Teachers were informed about the survey and its purpose at a staff meeting. Teachers were surveyed during a staff meeting on a staff development day in January. 93% of the teachers at Suburban High responded to the survey. The survey was voluntary and teachers were not made to participate.

An explanation of the survey was given to students during an extended homeroom period prior to students taking a standardized assessment. Sophomore and junior students were surveyed for this study. Seniors were not surveyed due to the fact any recommendations that come from this study will need to be applied in the 2009-2010 school year. An e-mail was sent to all students on their school account. There was a low initial response rate of 25%. Teachers were sent an invitation to bring their classes of sophomores and juniors to the computer lab to complete the survey. An acceptable response rate of 55% was achieved.

Parents were sent an e-mail through our Parent Portal system during the second week in December to inform them about the survey. The Parent Portal system is part of Suburban High's computer information system and allows parents to view their child's grades, attendance, and lunch account information. Parents gain access through the use of an e-mail account that the schools keeps on file. Two-parent families were asked to

complete only one survey. An acceptable response rate of 35% was achieved.

Participants were asked to complete the survey in one session. The survey was linked to the district website and was open from January 1-22, 2009. All surveys were anonymous and there was no tracking of completed surveys.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed to determine perceptions of teachers, parents, and students of Suburban High. Data results were organized in order to provide answers to the research questions. Differences in perceptions among the three groups were analyzed. Differences in perceptions of teachers based on years of experience were also analyzed. Finally, differences in perception of parents based on the number of children who have attended Suburban High were analyzed. Each participant responded to the 34 statements in the OCDQ-RS.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine differences in perceptions among teachers, students, and parents. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to determine differences in perceptions of teachers who had 0-5, 6-10, and 11 or more years of teaching experience. The final analysis of variance that was conducted was used to determine differences in perceptions of parents who have had one, two, and three or more children attend Suburban High. If significant differences were identified between the groups, a Bonferroni post hoc analysis was used to determine in which area significant differences existed. For the purpose of this study, statistical significance was set at the .05 level.

Another analysis was done in order to standardize scores. All subtests were scored. An average score for each item was computed to the nearest hundredth. The

average school scores for the items in each subtest were added to give the subtest scores. These scores were converted to a standardized score with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Finally, scores were computed to find out the openness index. From this data, a comparison of schools can be made from the original sample that developed the OCDQ-RS (Hoy et al., 1991).

Chapter IV reports on data which pertaining to the research questions presented in Chapters I and III. In order to determine whether there are differences in perceptions, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. The differences were based on the demographic variables of years of experience and number of children who have attended Suburban High.

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for this study. These are based on analysis and discussion of the data presented in the chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the data in order to answer the research questions presented in Chapter I. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students in relationship to school climate at Suburban High. Analysis also investigated whether there were different perceptions among parents who had children previously attending Suburban High.

The study determined the perceptions of the participants regarding the climate at Suburban High. It also determined the differences between the perceptions of participants regarding the climate at Suburban High. The study determined the differences of perceptions among teachers based on years of experience. Lastly, the study determined the differences in perceptions among parents based on the number of children they have had attend Suburban High. The data were analyzed using an analysis of variance comparing differences among the three stakeholder groups. For the purpose of this study, statistical significance was set at the .05 level.

Description of the Sample

This study utilized data collected from a survey of teachers, parents, and students at Suburban High. Stakeholder demographic information for this sample is presented in Table 2. Three stakeholder groups took part in this study. There were 535 students who participated in the survey, which made up over half of the participants (67.1%). There were 93 (11.8%) teachers who participated in the survey. There were 163 (20.6%)

parents who participated in the survey. Overall, 791 participants participated in this study.

Table 2. Stakeholder Participation by Completed Survey (n=791).

Subject	F	%
Teacher	93	11.8
Parent	163	20.6
Student	535	67.6

Individual information for teachers is presented in Table 3. Ninety-three teachers participated in this study. Teacher demographics were broken down by gender and years of experience. Thirty-nine (41.9%) of the participants were male while 54 (58.1%) were female. There were 40 (43.1%) teachers with more than 11+ years of experience. The category of 6-10 years of experience had the least representation with 15 teachers (16.1%). Thirty-eight teachers (40.9%) have been in the field of education from 0-5 years.

Table 3. Teacher Demographic Information Regarding Gender and Years of Teaching Experience (n=93).

Characteristics	F	%
Gender		
Male	39	41.9
Female	54	58.1
Years of Experience		
0-5	38	40.9
6-10	15	16.1
11+	40	43.0

Individual information for students is presented in Table 4. There were 535 students who participated in this study. There were 307 (57.4%) females who participated in the survey and 228 (42.6%) males. By grade, 279 (52.1%) 11th-grade students and 256 (47.9%) 10th-grade students participated in the survey.

Table 4: Student Demographic Information on Gender and Year in School (n=535).

Characteristics	F	%
Gender		
Male	228	42.6
Female	307	57.4
Year in School		
10 th	256	47.9
11 th	279	52.1

Individual information for parents is presented in Table 5. There were 161 parents who participated in this study. Demographics were broken down by type of family and number of children. Of parents who responded, 128 (78.5%) were two-parent families. There were only four (3.5%) participants who were in the other category. Twenty-nine (18.0%) parents were single parent families. There were 70 (43.5%) parents who had one child. Fifty-six (34.8%) parents had two children. Thirty-five parents (21.7%) had three or more children.

Table 5. Parent Demographic Information on Type of Family and Number of Children (n=161).

Characteristics	N	%
Type of Family		
Two Parent	128	78.5
Single	29	18.0
Other	4	3.5
Number of Children		
1	70	43.5
2	56	34.8
3 or more	35	21.7

Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High? In Table 6 are the means of the teachers on the 34 items of the survey. Means were analyzed in relation to the five constructs that the OCDQ-RS measured. The five constructs are divided into two areas: teacher and administrator behavior. The teacher constructs are frustrated, engaged, and intimate behavior. The administrator constructs are directive and supportive behavior. Each statement measures a specific construct. The means were averaged for each construct. Means could range from 0-4.

The top five means were on Statements 5 (3.18), 11 (3.23), 8 (2.89), 3 (2.72), and 4 (2.75). Three of the statements (3, 4, and 11) measured engaged teacher behavior. The two other statements measured supportive administrative behavior (5) and frustrated teacher behavior (8). The five lowest means were on Statements 1 (1.94), 13 (1.94), 10 (1.69), 20 (1.81), and 33 (1.89). Three of three of the statements (10, 20, and 33) measured engaged teacher behavior.

When looking at administrator behavior, teachers felt administration was more supportive (2.59) than directive (2.12). When asked about their own behavior, teachers perceived they were engaged (2.39) more than intimate (2.27). They did, however, feel frustrated (2.36) at a high level.

Table 6. Means of Teachers at Suburban High (n=93).

Statement	Mean
1. The mannerisms of teachers at this school are annoying.	1.94
2. Teachers have too many committee requirements.	2.35
3. Teachers spend time after school with students who have individual problems.	2.72
4. Teachers are proud of their school.	2.75
5. The administration sets an example by working hard himself/herself.	3.18
6. The administration compliments teachers.	2.54
7. Teacher-administrator conferences are dominated by the principal.	2.22
8. Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.	2.89
9. Teachers interrupt other faculty members who are talking in faculty meetings.	2.03
10. Student government has an influence on school policy.	1.69
11. Teachers are friendly with students.	3.23
12. The administration rules with an iron fist.	2.08
13. The administration monitors everything teachers do.	1.94
14. Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at their school.	2.17
15. Administrative paperwork is burdensome this school.	2.44
16. Teachers help and support each other.	2.69
17. Pupils solve their problems through logical reasoning.	2.05
18. The administration closely checks teacher activities.	2.02
19. The administration is autocratic.	2.20
20. The morale of teachers is high.	1.81
21. Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.	1.95
22. Assigned nonteaching duties are excessive.	2.53
23. The administration goes out of his or her way to help teachers.	2.23
24. The administration explains his or her reason for criticism to teachers.	2.33
25. The administration is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed.	2.81
26. Teachers invite other faculty member to visit them at home.	1.83
28. Teachers really enjoy working here.	2.39
29. The administration uses constructive criticism.	2.53
30. The administration looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty.	2.54
31. The administration supervises teachers closely.	2.09
32. The administration talks more than listens.	2.30
33. Pupils are trusted to work together without supervision.	1.89
34. Teachers respect the personal competence of their colleagues.	2.71

In Table 7 are the means of parents on the 34 items of the survey. Means were analyzed in relation to the five constructs that the OCDQ-RS measured.

The top five means were on Statements 4 (2.98), 5 (2.87), 11 (2.92), 16 (2.83), and 28 (2.68). Four of the statements (4, 11, 16, and 28) measured engaged

teacher behavior. The five lowest means were on Statements 1 (1.94), 13 (1.94), 10 (1.69), 20 (1.81), and 33 (1.89). Three of three of the statements (10, 20, and 33) measured engaged teacher behavior. The five lowest means were on Statements 1 (1.77), 2 (1.68), 9 (1.60), 10 (1.83), and 22 (1.81). Three of the statements (1, 2, and 9) measured frustrated teacher behavior. The other two statements (10 and 22) measured engaged teacher behavior.

Parents viewed the administration as more supportive (2.44) than directive (2.07). They believed teachers were engaged (2.50) more than intimate (2.09). Parents did not see teachers as being frustrated with their job as evident by a low mean of 1.79.

In Table 8 are the means of students on the 34 items of the survey. Means were analyzed in relation to five constructs that the OCDQ-RS measured.

Students felt administrator behavior was more directive (2.35) than supportive (2.29). They felt teachers were more engaged (2.59) than intimate (2.27). Students perceived teachers to have a low frustration level (1.98).

Table 7. Means of Parents at Suburban High (n=161).

Statement	Mean
1. The mannerisms of teachers at this school are annoying.	1.68
2. Teachers have too many committee requirements.	1.77
3. Teachers spend time after school with students who have individual problems.	2.35
4. Teachers are proud of their school.	2.98
5. The administration sets an example by working hard himself/herself.	2.87
6. The administration compliments teachers.	2.56
7. Teacher-administrator conferences are dominated by the principal.	1.90
8. Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.	1.90
9. Teachers interrupt other faculty members who are talking in faculty meetings.	1.60
10. Student government has an influence on school policy.	1.83
11. Teachers are friendly with students.	2.92
12. The administration rules with an iron fist.	2.09
13. The administration monitors everything teachers do.	1.98
14. Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at their school.	2.18
15. Administrative paperwork is burdensome this school.	1.99
16. Teachers help and support each other.	2.83
17. Pupils solve their problems through logical reasoning.	2.42
18. The administration closely checks teacher activities.	2.23
19. The administration is autocratic.	2.41
20. The morale of teachers is high.	2.28
21. Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.	2.10
22. Assigned nonteaching duties are excessive.	1.81
23. The administration goes out of his or her way to help teachers.	2.31
24. The administration explains his or her reason for criticism to teachers.	2.23
25. The administration is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed.	2.37
26. Teachers invite other faculty members to visit them at home.	1.91
27. Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis.	2.18
28. Teachers really enjoy working here.	2.68
29. The administration uses constructive criticism.	2.37
30. The administration looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty.	2.43
31. The administration supervises teachers closely.	2.07
32. The administration talks more than listens.	2.23
33. Pupils are trusted to work together without supervision.	2.16
34. Teachers respect the personal competence of their colleagues.	2.59

The top five means were on Statements 3 (2.82), 16 (2.82), 27 (2.79), 11 (2.77), and 5 (2.74). Three of the statements (3, 11, and 16) measured engaged teacher

behavior. One statement (5) measured supportive administrative behavior, and one statement (27) measured intimate teacher behavior. The five lowest means were on Statements 9 (1.70), 26 (1.93), 2 (1.96), 10 (1.96), and 1 (2.02). Three of the statements (1, 2, and 9) measured frustrated teacher behavior. One statement (10) measured engaged teacher behavior, and one statement (26) measured intimate teacher behavior.

Table 8. Means of Students at Suburban High (n=570).

Statement	Mean
1. The mannerisms of teachers at this school are annoying.	2.02
2. Teachers have too many committee requirements.	1.96
3. Teachers spend time after school with students who have individual problems.	2.83
4. Teachers are proud of their school.	3.10
5. The administration sets an example by working hard himself/herself.	2.74
6. The administration compliments teachers.	2.35
7. Teacher-administrator conferences are dominated by the principal.	2.36
8. Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.	2.03
9. Teachers interrupt other faculty members who are talking in faculty meetings.	1.70
10. Student government has an influence on school policy.	1.96
11. Teachers are friendly with students.	2.77
12. The administration rules with an iron fist.	2.53
13. The administration monitors everything teachers do.	2.22
14. Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at their school.	2.30
15. Administrative paperwork is burdensome this school.	2.16
16. Teachers help and support each other.	2.82
17. Pupils solve their problems through logical reasoning.	2.44
18. The administration closely checks teacher activities.	2.23
19. The administration is autocratic.	2.31
20. The morale of teachers is high.	2.59
21. Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.	2.06
22. Assigned nonteaching duties are excessive.	2.03
23. The administration goes out of his or her way to help teachers.	2.10
24. The administration explains his or her reason for criticism to teachers.	2.04
25. The administration is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed.	2.29
26. Teachers invite other faculty member to visit them at home.	1.93
27. Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis.	2.79
28. Teachers really enjoy working here.	2.69
29. The administration uses constructive criticism.	2.22
30. The administration looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty.	2.33
31. The administration supervises teachers closely.	2.18
32. The administration talks more than listens.	2.62
33. Pupils are trusted to work together without supervision.	2.20
34. Teachers respect the personal competence of their colleagues.	2.56

Research Question 2

What are the differences among the teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High? A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine differences among teachers, parents, and students. ANOVA results revealed significant differences for 26 statements at the .05 level.

Eleven statements that measured administrator behavior had significant differences among the groups. Within the construct supportive principal behavior, six of the seven statements displayed significant differences among teachers, students, and parents. Two of the statements had a probability of $<.001$ and two of the statements had a probability of .001. The other two statements had a probability of .018 and .020. For directive behavior, five of the seven statements indicated significant differences. Three of the statements had a probability of $<.001$. One statement had a probability of .002 and the other probability was .032. Overall, 78% of the statements that measured administrator behavior displayed significant differences.

Eight statements did not indicate significant differences. Three of those statements measured intimate teacher behavior. Two of the statements measured engaged teacher behavior and directive administrative behavior. One statement measured supportive administrative behavior.

Fifteen statements that measured teacher behavior had significant differences among the groups. Engaged teacher behavior had eight statements that indicated significant differences. Four of the statements that indicated a significant difference had a probability of $<.001$. One of the statements had a probability of .001. Another statement had a probability of .011. The last two statements had probabilities of .007

and .005. Only one statement had a significant difference within engaged teacher behavior. This statement had a probability of <.001. All six statements that measured frustrated teacher behavior indicated significant differences. All six items had a probability of <.001. Overall, 75% of the statements that measured teacher behavior displayed significant differences.

Table 9. Significant Differences among Teachers, Parents, and Students for Significant ANOVAS (* indicates significance).

Statement	Teacher	Parent	Student	F	p
1	1.94	1.68	2.02	11.95	<.001*
2	2.35	1.77	1.96	18.30	<.001*
3	2.72	2.35	2.83	17.54	<.001*
4	2.75	2.98	3.10	6.83	.001*
5	3.18	2.87	2.74	9.79	<.001*
6	2.54	2.56	2.35	4.04	.018*
7	2.22	1.90	2.36	15.01	<.001*
8	2.89	1.90	2.03	53.87	<.001*
9	2.03	1.60	1.70	10.91	<.001*
10	1.69	1.83	1.96	4.52	.011*
11	3.23	2.92	2.77	11.52	<.001*
12	2.08	2.09	2.53	8.86	<.001*
13	1.94	1.98	2.22	6.18	.002*
14	2.17	2.18	2.30	1.74	.176
15	2.44	1.99	2.16	10.34	<.001*
16	2.69	2.83	2.82	1.01	.366
17	2.05	2.42	2.44	9.20	<.001*
18	2.02	2.15	2.23	2.65	.071
19	2.20	2.41	2.31	3.47	.032*
20	1.81	2.28	2.03	30.71	<.001*
21	1.95	2.10	2.06	1.33	.266
22	2.53	1.81	2.03	27.74	<.001*
23	2.23	1.81	2.10	3.93	.020*
24	2.33	2.23	2.04	7.29	.001*
25	2.81	2.37	2.29	13.81	<.001*
26	1.83	1.91	1.93	.59	.557
27	2.13	2.18	2.79	40.86	<.001*
28	2.39	2.68	2.69	5.01	.007*
29	2.53	2.37	2.22	6.84	.001*
30	2.54	2.43	2.33	2.64	.072
31	2.09	2.07	2.18	1.21	.299
32	2.30	2.23	2.62	11.38	<.001*
33	1.89	2.16	2.20	5.26	.005*
34	2.71	2.59	2.56	1.24	.291

From the data, it is evident that differences in perceptions exist among teachers, students, and parents. It is apparent differences in frustrated teacher behavior exist. Overall, there are differences in perceptions among the three participant groups.

The Bonferroni post hoc analysis was utilized to determine where differences were significant between teachers, students and parents. There were 15 statements that had significant differences when comparing teachers to parents. Twenty statements had significant differences when comparing teachers to students. There were 12 statements that had significant differences when comparing parents to students. Significant differences were identified at the .05 level.

There were multiple statements with significant differences when analyzing data related to teachers and parents. For supportive administrative behavior, two statements indicated significant differences. The probabilities were .016 and <.001. In each instance, the teachers had a higher mean than parents. When looking at directive administrative behavior, one question indicated a significant difference at the .015 level. The mean for teachers was higher in this statement, also.

Engaged teacher behavior had six statements with significant differences. Teachers had higher means on two of the statements with probabilities of .002 and .011. On the other four statements, parent means were higher than teachers. The probabilities were .001, <.001, .022, and .037. All six statements in the frustrated construct indicated significant differences. Teachers had higher means in all six statements. Five of the probabilities were at the <.001 level while the other probability was .020. There were no significant differences in the intimate construct.

Overall, the most differences between teachers and parents were seen in engaged and frustrated teacher behavior. From this data, it is evident that teachers and parents have significantly different perceptions when looking at teacher behavior.

There were multiple statements with significant differences when analyzing data related to teachers and students. For supportive administrative behavior, four statements indicated significant differences. Teachers had a higher mean in each instance. Two of the statements had a probability level of $<.001$, and the other two statements had a probability of $.002$. For directive administrative behavior, three statements indicated significant differences. Students had higher mean on each statement. Probability was the $.007$, $.017$, and $.009$ levels. Teachers felt administration was more supportive while students felt administrative behavior was directive.

Engaged teacher behavior had three statements where significant differences existed. Student means were higher on six of seven statements. Three of those statements had a probability at the $<.001$ level. The other three probabilities were $.001$, $.007$, and $.004$. Teachers had higher means than students on one statement with a probability of $<.001$. Students felt teachers were engaged at a higher level. Five statements that measured frustrated teacher behavior indicated significant differences. In each instance, teacher means were higher than student means. Four of the statements had a probability of $<.001$. The other difference was significant at the $.007$ level. Teachers felt more frustrated than did students. Only one statement was significantly different for engaged teacher behavior. The student mean was higher and it was significant at the $<.001$ level.

Overall, the most differences between teachers and students were seen in engaged and frustrated teacher behavior. From this data, it is evident that teachers felt more frustrated while students felt teachers were more engaged.

When analyzing the differences between parents and students, there were multiple statements with significant differences. For supportive administrative behavior, three statements indicated significant differences. Parents had higher means than student in each instances. Probabilities were at the .031, .019, and .024 levels. Five statements that measured supportive administrative behavior indicated significant differences. Students had higher means in each instances. Two statements had a probability of $<.001$. The other probabilities were .001, .014, and .029. Parents felt administration was more supportive while students felt the administration was directive.

Two statements had significant differences when looking at engaged teacher behavior. Student means were higher on both statements. A probability level of $<.001$ and .001 were seen. Three statements indicated significant differences for frustrated teacher behavior. Student mean was higher than parents on each statement. The probability levels were $<.001$, .022, and .008. Only one statement related to intimate teacher behavior had a significant difference. The student mean was higher and the probability level was $<.001$. Students felt teachers were more frustrated than did parents. However, they also saw them as more engaged and intimate than parents.

Table 10. Significant Differences between Teachers, Parents, and Students for Significant ANOVAS.

Statement	1-2 (p values)	1-3 (p values)	2-3 (p values)
1	.020 (+)	ns	<.001 (-)
2	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)	.022 (-)
3	.002 (+)	ns	<.001 (-)
4	Ns	.001 (-)	ns
5	.016 (+)	<.001 (+)	ns
6	ns	ns (+)	.031 (+)
7	.015 (+)	ns (-)	<.001 (-)
8	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)	ns
9	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)	ns
10	ns	.012 (-)	ns
11	.011 (+)	<.001 (+)	ns
12	ns	.007 (-)	.001 (-)
13	ns	.017 (-)	.014 (-)
15	<.001 (+)	.007 (+)	ns
17	.001 (-)	<.001 (-)	ns
19	ns	ns	.029 (-)
20	<.001 (-)	<.001 (-)	.001 (-)
22	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)	.008 (-)
23	Ns	ns	.019 (+)
24	Ns	.002 (+)	.024 (+)
25	<.001 (+)	<.001 (+)	Ns
27	Ns	<.001 (-)	<.001 (-)
28	.022 (-)	.007 (-)	Ns
29	Ns	.002 (+)	Ns
32	Ns	.009 (-)	<.001 (-)
33	.037 (-)	.004 (-)	Ns

Legend: 1-Teachers
 2-Parents
 3-Students
 + Indicates higher mean for first group
 - Indicates higher mean for second group

Table 11 provides a summary of means for significant differences between teachers, parents, and students. There were multiple statements with significant differences when analyzing data related to the dimensions measured within the OCDQ-RS.

When looking at teachers and parents, teachers had a higher level of frustration than parents on the six significant statements. Teachers and parents both had three means that were higher on the six significant statements that measured engaged teacher behavior. When looking at supportive principal behavior, teachers perceived administration to be more supportive on both statements that were significant. For directive behavior, teachers perceived administration as more supportive than did parents on the one significant statement. There were no significant statements related to intimate teacher behavior.

When looking at teachers and students, teachers had a higher level of frustration than students on the five significant statements. For engaged teacher behavior, students perceived teacher were more engaged on seven of the significant statements. Teachers perceived higher engagement on only one of the significant statements. When looking at intimate teacher behavior, students perceived a higher level of intimacy than did teachers on the one significant statement. Teachers perceived that administration was more supportive on all four significant statements. For directive behavior, students perceived administration as more directive than did teachers on the two significant statements.

When looking at parents and students, students perceived a higher level of frustration among teachers than did parents on the three significant statements. For engaged teacher behavior, students perceived teachers to be more engaged than did parents on both significant statements. Students perceived teachers displayed intimate behavior more than teachers on the one significant statement. For supportive behavior, teachers perceived administration to be more supportive than did students on all three

significant statements. Students perceived the administration to be more directive than did teachers on all five significant statements.

Table 11. Summary of Means for Only Significant Differences between Teachers, Parents, or Students for Significant ANOVAS.

Statement	Dimension	1-2	1-3	2-3
1	F	+	ns	-
2	F	+	+	-
3	E	+	ns	-
4	E	ns	-	Ns
5	S	+	+	S
6	S	ns	ns	+
7	D	+	ns	-
8	F	+	+	Ns
9	F	ns	-	Ns
11	E	+	+	Ns
12	D	ns	-	-
13	D	ns	-	-
15	F	+	+	ns
17	E	+	-	ns
19	D	ns	ns	-
20	E	-	-	-
22	F	+	+	-
23	S	ns	ns	+
24	S	ns	+	+
25	S	+	+	ns
27	I	ns	-	-
28	E	-	-	ns
29	S	ns	+	ns
30	S	ns	ns	ns
32	D	ns	-	-
33	E	-	-	ns

Legend: 1-Teachers

2-Parents

3-Students

F-Frustrated teacher behavior

E-Engaged teacher behavior

S-Supportive administrative behavior

D-Directive administrative behavior

I-Intimate teacher behavior

+ Indicates higher mean for first group

- Indicates higher mean for second group

In Table 12, the Bonferroni post hoc analysis was utilized to determine if differences were significant between stakeholder groups within the five dimensions as measured by the OCDQ-RS. There was one significant difference between teachers and parents within the intimate teacher behavior dimension. It had a probability of $<.001$. All five dimensions had significant differences between teachers and students. Supportive and directive administrative behavior were significant at the $<.001$ level. For teacher behavior, engaged behavior was significant at the .002 level. Frustrated teacher behavior had a probability of $<.001$. Finally, intimate teacher behavior was significant at the .001 level. Four of the five dimensions had significant differences between parents and students. Supportive and directive administrative behavior were both significant at the .016 and $<.001$ levels. Frustrated teacher behavior had a probability of $<.001$ level. Intimate teacher behavior was significant at the .009 level.

Overall, data indicated that teachers and parents shared similar perceptions related to school climate at Suburban High. However, parents and students and teachers and students had significantly different perceptions within a majority of the dimensions.

Table 12: Significant Differences between Teachers, Parents, and Students Based on the Five Dimensions for Significant ANOVAS.

Dimension	1-2	1-3	2-3
Supportive	ns	$<.001$ (+)	.016 (+)
Directive	ns	$<.001$ (-)	$<.001$ (-)
Engaged	ns	.002 (-)	ns
Frustrated	$<.001$ (+)	$<.001$ (+)	$<.001$ (-)
Intimate	ns	.001(-)	.009 (-)

Legend: 1-Teachers
 2-Parents
 3-Students
 + Indicates higher mean for first group
 - Indicates higher mean for second group

Research Question 3

What are the differences among perceptions regarding school climate by teachers, based on years of experience? A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine differences among teachers based on years of experience (Table 13). Years of experience were categorized into 0-5 years (1), 6-10 years (2), and 11+ years (3). ANOVA results revealed significant differences for 26 statements at the .05 level.

Five statements had significant differences based on teacher years of experience. Four of the differences were found in two variables that measured administrative behavior. Three statements were significantly difference for supportive administrative behavior. These statements were significant at the .039, .017, and 0.47 levels. For directive administrative behavior, one question had a significant difference. It had a probability of .032. For this research question, 80% of the differences were found in the areas that measured administrative behavior.

One question had a significant difference in the teacher behavior constructs. The statement measured frustrated teacher behavior and had a probability of .014. Teachers felt committee requirements were excessive. This accounted for 20% of the differences.

From the data, differences in perceptions exist among teachers based on years of experience. Overall, there are differences in perceptions within the administrative constructs. Perceptions are similar within the teacher behavior constructs.

Table 13. Significant Differences among Teachers Based on Years of Experience for Significant ANOVAS (* indicates significance).

Statement	1	2	3	F	P
1	1.84	1.80	2.08	1.293	.280
2	2.08	2.40	2.60	4.442	.014*
3	2.74	2.80	2.68	.174	.841
4	2.71	2.47	2.90	2.064	.133
5	3.37	3.07	3.05	2.093	.129
6	2.76	2.67	2.28	3.360	.039*
7	2.08	2.07	2.40	1.184	.311
8	2.82	2.80	3.00	.538	.586
9	1.95	2.13	2.08	.311	.734
10	1.79	1.47	1.68	1.313	.274
11	3.21	3.13	3.28	.277	.759
12	1.95	1.80	2.30	2.712	.072
13	1.97	1.93	1.90	.071	.932
14	2.08	2.13	2.28	.665	.517
15	2.26	2.33	2.65	1.957	.147
16	2.76	2.53	2.68	.399	.672
17	2.11	1.93	2.05	.394	.675
18	2.18	2.00	1.88	1.557	.216
19	2.00	2.13	2.42	2.337	.102
20	1.87	1.43	1.81	1.227	.298
21	1.87	1.93	2.02	.597	.553
22	2.53	2.67	2.48	.203	.817
23	2.50	2.00	2.05	4.253	.017*
24	2.53	2.27	2.18	1.990	.143
25	2.95	2.87	2.65	1.283	.282
26	1.84	1.80	1.82	.020	.981
27	2.34	1.93	2.00	2.934	.058
28	2.53	2.13	2.35	1.785	.174
29	2.74	2.40	2.38	3.167	.047*
30	2.68	2.73	2.32	2.059	.134
31	2.29	1.93	1.95	2.276	.109
32	2.05	2.27	2.55	3.588	.032
33	1.89	1.93	1.88	.041	.960
34	2.55	2.60	2.90	2.377	.099

Legend: 1-0-5 years experience
2-6-10 years of experience
3-11 or more years of experience

The Bonferroni post hoc analysis was utilized to determine where differences were significant between teachers based on years of experience. Four statements indicated significant differences between teachers with 0-5 years of experience and teachers with 11+ years of experience. There were no significant differences between the other levels of teaching experience.

Two of the statements that had significant differences were in the supportive administrative behavior construct. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience had a higher mean than teachers with 11+ years of experience. There were significant at the .0041 and .030 levels. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience felt the administration was more supportive than did veteran teachers. These teachers felt the administration complimented them and was there to help. For directive behavior, one statement was significant. Teachers with 11+ years of experience had a higher mean on this statement. It was significant at the .027 level. These teachers felt the administration talked more than listened in this instance. Overall, the differences between teachers were not major.

For teacher behavior, one statement indicated significant differences. Teachers with 11+ years of experience had a higher mean and it was significant at the .011 level. Veteran teachers felt they had too many committee requirements.

Table 14. Significant Differences between Teachers Based on Years of Experience for Significant ANOVAS.

Question	1-3
2	.011 (-)
6	.041 (+)
23	.030 (+)
32	.027 (-)

Legend: 1-0-5 years of experience
3-11 or more years of experience

Research Question 4

What are the differences in perceptions based on number of their children who have attended Suburban High?

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine differences among parents based on the number of children who attended Suburban High. The categories that were analyzed were one student, two students, or three or more students. ANOVA results indicated significant differences at the .05 level.

There were no significant differences when looking at administrative behavior. However, there were two statements that indicated significant differences for teacher behavior. For engaged teacher behavior, there was a probability level of .016. The perceptions of the groups differed about whether teachers were friendly with their students. For frustrated teacher behavior, there was a probability level of .006. The group perceptions differed on whether administrative behavior paper work is burdensome. Overall, the perceptions of these parents were similar.

Table 15. Differences in Means and Significance among Parents Based on Number of Children Who Attended Suburban High for Significant ANOVAS (* indicates significance).

Statement	1	2	3	F	P
1	1.59	1.79	1.69	1.247	.290
2	1.70	1.86	1.75	.834	.436
3	2.41	2.27	2.33	.583	.560
4	2.96	2.95	3.08	.416	.660
5	2.94	2.79	2.89	.494	.611
6	2.54	2.57	2.58	.617	.541
7	1.84	1.89	2.03	1.485	.230
8	1.80	1.96	2.00	1.485	.230
9	1.53	1.61	1.72	1.189	.307
10	1.83	1.86	1.81	.055	.947
11	3.09	2.71	2.89	4.268	.016*
12	1.99	2.07	2.33	2.129	.122
13	2.07	1.91	1.92	.882	.416
14	2.10	2.12	2.39	2.512	.084
15	1.83	2.02	2.25	5.369	.006*
16	2.84	2.80	2.83	.050	.951
17	2.41	2.39	2.47	.150	.861
18	2.13	2.23	2.06	.633	.532
19	2.03	2.14	2.19	.654	.521
20	2.39	2.25	2.11	1.167	.314
21	2.16	1.96	2.19	1.594	.206
22	1.79	1.82	1.83	.098	.907
23	2.33	2.41	2.14	1.531	.220
24	2.19	2.34	2.14	1.134	.324
25	2.47	2.32	2.25	1.233	.294
26	1.87	1.77	2.19	4.746	.010*
27	2.23	2.04	2.31	1.799	.169
28	2.67	2.71	2.64	.115	.892
29	2.46	2.30	2.33	.891	.412
30	2.44	2.41	2.44	.041	.960
31	2.11	2.11	1.94	.791	.455
32	2.13	2.25	2.39	1.476	.232
33	2.19	2.20	2.06	.542	.583
34	2.54	2.57	2.72	.837	.435

Legend: 1-Parents who had one child attend
2-Parents who had two children attend
3-Parents who had three or more children attend

The Bonferroni post hoc analysis was utilized to determine where differences were significant between parents who have had children attend Suburban High. One statement indicated a significant difference between parents who had one child attend and parents who had two children attend Suburban High. The other significant difference was between parents who had one child attend and parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High.

A significant difference in perceptions was seen between parents who had one child attend and two children attend Suburban High. The parents with one child who attended had a higher mean than parents who had two children attend Suburban High. It had a probability of .012. Parents with one child perceived teachers as more friendly with students than did parents who had two children attend. The probability was .009. There was one significant difference in perceptions between parents who had two children and parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High. Parents with three children who have attended had a higher mean than parents who had two children attend Suburban High. They believed teachers invited other teachers to their home.

A difference in perceptions was seen between parents who had one child and parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High. Parents who had three children attend had a higher mean. The statement had a probability of .004. Parents with three children who attended perceived administrative paperwork was more burdensome than parents who had one child attend Suburban High. The perceptions of the three groups were similar and major differences did not exist.

Table 16. Significant Difference between Parents Based on the Number of Children Who Attended Suburban High.

Statement	1-2	2-3	1-3
11	.012 (+)	ns	ns
15	ns	ns	.004 (-)
26	ns	.009 (+)	ns

Legend: 1-Parents who had one child attend
 2-Parents who had two children attend
 3-Parents who had three or more children attend
 + Indicates higher mean for first group
 - Indicates higher mean for second group

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for this study. These are based on analysis and discussion of the data presented in this chapter

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Change can become exciting, uplifting, and vital. The message is heartening and spiritually invigorating. There is always hope. The world is always different.

Each day is potentially more exciting and full of meaning than the last”

(Bolman & Deal, 1984, p. 189).

Chapter V provides a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for this study.

Chapter V includes conclusions and limitations from the study along with recommendations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine teacher, parent, and student perceptions of the school climate at Suburban High. This study identified differences in perceptions between teachers, parents, and student. Participants responded to one survey instrument. The instrument was the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire-RS (OCDQ-RS), a revision by Hoy and Clover (1986) of the original OCDQ by Halpin and Croft (1963). The results of this study will be used to develop an action plan for managing school climate at Suburban High. The study provided data for the creation of recommendations to better meet the needs of participants. Finally, the findings provided baseline data for the school to use for engaging participants in a critical conversation around school climate. Suburban High School is a 10-12 high school in the upper

Midwest. At the time of this study, enrollment was 1,310 students. There is a growing immigrant population, and the high school has 16 different languages spoken in the building. Lack of space for the growing student population is a concern. The district is in the process of going to the voters with a bond referendum in order to build a new high school, middle school, and elementary school. Plans are also in place to renovate the existing high school.

Data were analyzed to provide information regarding the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students. The results of the study indicated significant differences exist between the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students on 26 statements within the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-RS. When comparing teachers to parents, 15 statements indicated significant differences. Twenty statements had significant differences when comparing teachers to students. There were 12 statements that had significant differences when comparing parents to students.

Data indicated significant differences for teachers with 0-5 years of experience and teacher with 11 or more years of experience. Four statements indicated perceptions were significantly different. There were also significant differences among parents. There was one question that indicated significant differences between parents who had one child attend Suburban High and parents who had two children attend Suburban High. One question also indicated significant differences between parents who had one child attend Suburban High and parents who had three or more children attend suburban high.

Discussion

The following research questions were used to guide this study.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and students regarding school climate at Suburban High? The data from Chapter IV provided evidence that perceptions of school climate vary significantly within the three stakeholder groups. Teacher means were higher on 18 of the 34 statements when compared to parents. Student means were higher on 20 of the 34 statements when compared to teachers. Student means were higher on 23 of the 34 statements when compared to parents. Overall, average student means were higher than teachers and parents.

Student average mean for directive behavior of administration was higher on all statements when compared to both teachers and parents. Teacher average mean for supportive behavior was higher on 6 of the 7 statements that measured this variable. Teacher average mean for frustrated behavior of teachers was higher on three of the four statements that measured this variable. When analyzing intimate behavior of teachers, student average mean was higher on 5 of the 6 statements. Student average mean for engaged teacher behavior was higher on 5 of the 10 statements that measured this variable. Overall, the data indicated teachers believed administration was more supportive than did parents or students. Students perceived administration as more directive than did teachers and parents. Students perceived teachers displayed intimate and engaged behavior more than the other two stakeholder groups. Finally, teachers perceived a higher level of frustration than both parents and students.

Research Question 2

What are the differences among the teachers, parents, and students regarding the climate at Suburban High? There were 27 statements that indicated significant differences among teachers, parents, and students. Significant differences between teachers and parents occurred on 15 statements. Significant differences between teachers and students occurred on 20 statements. There were 12 statements that had significant differences when comparing parents to students.

Engaged teacher behavior had the most significant differences among teachers, parents, and students. Thirteen significant differences existed. Frustrated teacher behavior had the second most differences between the stakeholder groups with 10 instances. There were eight significant differences in the statements that measured supportive administrative behavior. Nine differences existed among the statements that measured directive administrative behavior. There were only two differences among participants within the statements that measured intimate teacher behavior.

On the statements that measured frustrated teacher behavior, there were two statements that indicated significant differences among all three stakeholder groups. Engaged behavior was the only other variable that displayed significant differences among teachers, parents, and students. The most significant differences in the frustrated teacher behavior variable were seen among teachers and parents in four instances. Teachers and students had the most significant differences within the engaged teacher behavior variable with six differences. In the supportive administration variable, both parents and students and teachers and students had three significant differences. In the directive administration variable, parents and students have five significant differences.

Within the intimate teacher variable, both teachers and students and parents and students displayed one significant difference. These results supported the results previously discussed related to Research Question 1.

Overall, most differences between teachers and parents were seen in engaged and frustrated teacher behavior. From this data, it is evident that teachers and parents have significantly different perceptions when looking at teacher behavior. The most differences between teachers and students were seen in engaged and frustrated teacher behavior. It is evident that teachers perceived more frustrated while students perceived teachers were more engaged. Parents perceived administration as more supportive than did students. Students perceived teachers were more frustrated than did parents. However, they also saw teachers as more engaged and intimate than parents.

Research Question 3

What are the differences among perceptions regarding school climate by teachers, based on years of experience? There is evidence that perceptions of school climate vary significantly among teachers when looking at years of experience. Teacher with 0-5 years of experience means were higher on 22 of the 34 statements when compared to teachers who had 6-10 years of experience. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience means were higher on 20 of the 34 statements when compared to teachers who had 11 or more years of experience. Teachers with 11 or more years of experience means were higher on 23 of the 34 statements when compared to teachers with 6-10 years of experience.

Teachers with 0-5 years of experience had the highest mean on 6 of the 7 statements that related to supportive administrative behavior. They also had the highest mean on 5 of the 10 statements that related to engaged teacher behavior. Teachers with

11 or more years of experience had the highest mean on 4 of the 7 statements that were linked to directive administrative behavior. Both teachers with 11 or more years of experience and teachers with 0-5 years of experience each had two means that were highest on statements that measured intimate teacher behavior. Teachers with 11 or more years of experience had the highest average mean on 4 of the 6 statements that measured frustrated teacher behavior.

There were four statements with significant differences between teachers with 0-5 years of experience and teachers with 11 or more years of experience. Supportive administrative behavior had two significant differences between the two groups. Frustrated teacher behavior and directive administrative behavior each had one question that indicated significant differences.

Teachers with 0-5 years of experience viewed the administration as more supportive. Teachers with the most experience had the perception that the administration was directive with staff. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience perceived more engaged than the other two groups of teachers. Teachers with the most experience also perceived the most frustration in their job.

Overall, newer teachers perceived more complimented and that administration was there to help them. Veteran teachers perceived the administration talked more than listened and they believed they were burdened with paperwork.

Research Question 4

What are the differences in perceptions based on number of children who have attended Suburban High? There is evidence that perceptions of school climate vary among parents when looking at number of children who have attended Suburban High.

Means of parents with one child who has attended Suburban High were higher on 15 of the 34 statements than parents who had two children who attended Suburban High.

Means of parents with one child who has attended Suburban High were higher on 14 of the 34 statements than parents who had three or more children who attended Suburban High. Means of parents with two children who have attended Suburban High were higher on 12 of the 34 statements than parents who had three or more children who attended Suburban High.

Parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High had the highest mean on 4 of the 6 statements that measured frustrated teacher behavior. These parents also had the highest means on all four statements that measured intimate teacher behavior. Parents with three or more children who have attended Suburban High also had the highest means on 4 of the 7 statements that measured directive administrative behavior. Parents with one child who has attended Suburban High had the highest means on 4 of the 10 statements that measured engaged teacher behavior. They also had the highest means on 4 of the 7 statements that measured supportive administrative behavior.

Three statements indicated significant differences based on the number of children who have attended Suburban High. One question measured engaged teacher behavior. Parents with one child who attended Suburban High had significant differences in perceptions when compared to parents who had two children attend Suburban High. Another statement had a significant difference and this was related to frustrated teacher behavior. Perceptions of parents with one child who have attended Suburban High were different than parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High. The final statement with a significant difference measured intimate teacher behavior. Parents who

had two children attend Suburban High felt teachers were more intimate than did parents who had three children attend Suburban High.

Overall, parents who had more than three children attend Suburban High perceived teacher behavior to be frustrated than did parents who had one child attend. These parents also perceived more intimate teacher behavior. They perceived the administration was directive in their behavior. These parents believed that paperwork was burdensome at the school. Parents with only one child who has attended perceived the administration was more supportive and that teachers were more engaged. They also believed that teachers were friendly with the students more than parents who had three or more children attend.

Limitations

This study was conducted one time at a single high school that had undergone significant changes in past 2 years. The OCDQ-RS was specifically designed for teachers thus making it a good fit. However, the instrument did not meet the specific needs of parents and students. The survey was not designed for use by students and parents. However, the reliability of the results was strong and this process did provide a starting point for the development of a better instrument. The survey did not address all the issues that Suburban High faces. Differences in perceptions are due to a variety of elements based on an individual's personality. For example, teachers may have attributed certain changes to the building level administration when in fact the change came from district administration. Parents understand school from their own experiences and the experiences of their children. One negative incident can attach harsh emotions to the school. A student may have had an overall positive experience at school, but parents

only remember the negative event. Students are not involved in major policy decisions at Suburban High. Due to their exclusion, they rationalize why policies are implemented. All of these situations result from a lack of knowledge which may cause perceptions to be unstable.

The OCDQ-RS data can be put into a standardized score for comparison. For this study, that was not necessary to answer the research statements. The standardized scores are useful in the recommendation process. This data is discussed later on in the recommendations section.

Conclusion

The significant differences between the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents on 26 of the 34 statements in the study provided data showing teachers, parents, and students perceive teacher and administrator behavior differently. Students perceived administration as more directive than did teachers and parents. Students perceived teachers displayed intimate and engaged behavior more than the other two stakeholder groups. Finally, teachers perceived a higher level of teacher frustration than both parents and students.

The significant differences between teachers with 0-5 years of experience and 11+ years of experience in the study provided data showing the two groups perceive teacher and administrative behavior differently. Two of the statements that had significant differences were in the supportive administrative behavior construct. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience perceived the administration was more supportive than did veteran teachers. These teachers believed administration complimented them and was there to

help. Teachers with 11+ years of experience perceived the administration talked more than listened in this instance and that committee requirements were burdensome.

Differences were seen between parents who had one child attend and parents who had two children attend Suburban High. The other significant difference was between parents who had one child and parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High. Overall, these differences were minor.

There was a significant difference in perceptions between parents who had one child attend and two children attend Suburban High. Parents with one child perceived teachers as more friendly with students than did parents who had two children attend. A difference in perceptions was seen between parents who had one child and parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High. Parents who had three children attend perceived administrative paperwork was more burdensome than parents who had one child attend Suburban High. The overall perceptions of the three groups were similar.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Educators

There are multiple recommendations for educators from this study. Many of the issues Suburban High faces are present in school districts throughout this country. Many opportunities are present to help change the climate of the school community. All of the recommendations are accompanied by the idea that change takes time and the road to successful change can be difficult and cumbersome.

Recommendation for Future Research

Educators should attempt to analyze whether the climate of the school has an effect on their standardized test scores. It would be wise to see if a correlation exists

between Adequate Yearly Progress and the climate of a school. It would take time to establish longitudinal data, but it may have a positive impact on scores in the future. If teachers, parents, and students realize that a positive climate must be in place in order to make AYP, the importance of climate could not be underestimated.

Educators should attempt to determine if a correlation exists between graduation rates and climate. This would involve a purposeful effort by the school district. Students will need to be pre-assessed prior to entering high school, assessed each year, and given a post-assessment after their class attends. For this to be effective, the district would need to address drop-outs, transfers to the alternative school, and students who attempt to earn their GED. It would also be tough to keep track of where students go when they leave the high school. However, if a correlation exists related to low graduation rates and climate, it would allow the district to design a strategic plan to raise the graduation rate. This plan could include interventions that are of a non-academic nature.

Recommendation I—Teachers

Admitting there are problems with school climate is the first step towards making it a positive characteristic within a school. Many schools engage in climate studies. Many of those schools do nothing with the data. The key is to use data to develop an action plan for managing school climate. This plan must solicit feedback from multiple sources in an effort to develop a plan that is all encompassing. In working with teachers, a multi-step plan may be utilized.

To utilize the results of the OCDQ-RS for teachers, Hoy et al. (1991) felt it wise to convert results to a standard score. It allows a comparison of a school profile with other schools. This data allows for a comparison of Suburban High to a normative sample

of schools. The standardized scores place Suburban High on a continuum which shows its placement within the constructs in comparison to similar schools. The current data is based on secondary schools in New Jersey. Standardizing the scores gives them a “common denominator” that allows direct comparisons among all schools. Even though this data was not necessary to answer the research questions, it is important to participants. By disseminating this data, it provides participants with a frame of reference for comparison of their school. The following comparisons are utilized:

1. If the score is 200, it is lower than 99% of the schools.
2. If the score is 300, it is lower than 97% of the schools.
3. If the score is 400, it is lower than 84% of the schools.
4. If the score is 500, it is average.
5. If the score is 600, it is higher than 84% of the schools.
6. If the score is 700, it is higher than 97% of the schools.
7. If the score is 800, it is higher than 99% of the schools.

There is also a score for the level of openness at a school. The following comparisons are utilized:

1. Above 600 Very High
2. 551-600 High
3. 525-550 Above Average
4. 511-524 Slightly Above Average
5. 490-510 Average
6. 476-489 Slightly below average
7. 450-475 Below average

8. 400-449 Low
9. Below 400 Very low

The results of Suburban High were:

1. Supportive behavior—487 (slightly below average)
2. Directive behavior—523 (slightly above average)
3. Engaged behavior—286 (lower than 97% of schools)
4. Frustrated behavior—590 (higher than 84% of schools—within standard deviation)
5. Intimate behavior—405 (lower than 84% of schools—within standard deviation)
6. Openness—415 (low)

In Table 17, the average means for teachers, parents, and students for the five dimensions are reported. For these results, it would be considered a success if the means were higher than 2.0 on supportive, engaged, and intimate behavior. A mean of less than 2.0 would indicate success for directive and frustrated behavior.

All three means were above 2.0 for teachers (2.61), parents (2.45), and students (2.28) for supportive administrative behavior. This would indicate the three groups perceive the administration as supporting their various needs. For directive administrative behavior, the means for teachers (2.11), parents (2.08), and students (2.39) were all above 2.0. These results indicate all three groups perceive the administration as directive in some of their actions. This is an area of concern. For engaged teacher behavior, all three means for teachers (2.39), parents (2.51), and students (2.60) were above 2.0. The three groups perceive teachers as engaged. Two of

the three means for frustrated teacher behavior were below 2.0. Teachers (2.36) had the highest mean indicating a strong level of frustration. Parents (1.77) and students (1.98) perceived less teacher frustration. The means for intimate teacher behavior were all over 2.0. Teachers (2.02), parents (2.11), and students (2.26) perceived teacher behavior as intimate.

Overall, the means in this table support the idea that the school is healthy for the most part. There is a concern with frustrated teacher behavior and directive administrative behavior. These concerns will be addressed in the following pages. However; intimate, supportive, and engaged behaviors appear to be strong at Suburban High.

Table 17. Average Means for Teachers, Parents, and Students for the Five Dimensions as Measured by the OCDQ-RS.

Dimension	1	2	3
Supportive	2.61	2.45	2.28
Directive	2.11	2.08	2.39
Engaged	2.39	2.51	2.60
Frustrated	2.36	1.77	1.98
Intimate	2.02	2.11	2.26

Legend: 1-Teachers
2-Parents
3-Students

Implementation Model

From these data, it is evident Suburban High has problems with engaged, frustrated, and intimate teacher behavior. Supportive and administrative directive behavior was in the average range. The administration was disappointed in these results. They wanted to be above average in the supportive construct, and below average in the directive construct. Openness was low and an area that raised concern. When these

results were calculated, a presentation was given to the staff of Suburban High explaining the meaning. At this meeting, a decision was made with all staff to design a purposeful plan to address the concerns brought out by the OCDQ-RS. The following plan is in the process of being fully developed.

What has been done. The first step was the development of a School Climate Team. Team is purposely used in this instance instead of the term committee. In the OCDQ-RS, the term committee is linked with a negative statement. In this study, teachers believed too much committee work interfered with their ability to teach. Therefore, the term team has been utilized to promote a positive connotation. Teachers became part of the team in one of two ways. They volunteered for a position or they were chosen by the team after the first meeting. The team has 20 teachers and 1 administrator. The administrative team at Suburban High made a decision that only one administrator would be present at the meetings in order to promote positive and effective communication (2009, February 11). The School Climate Team supported this decision. It will be important to keep the representation of the team somewhat proportional to the amount of teachers who have 0-5 years of experience, 6-10 years of experience, and 11 or more years of experience. This will allow all factions of the teaching staff to have a voice in this process. Each team member must commit to being part of this process for 1½ years. This will include the remainder of this school year and all of the 2009-2010 school year. The team will work on quick and visible solutions for the remainder of this year. They will develop the action plan to manage climate next year.

After the team is chosen, the next aspect was setting up meeting dates, length of meetings, and norms for conducting meetings. Feedback was received from team

members as to the previous mentioned items. It was agreed that meetings would be held Wednesdays after school every other week. The team felt it was necessary to make a commitment to this process. Members of the climate team were asked how long they wanted to have meetings. The team wanted meetings that were 45 minutes long. Meetings begin at 3:30 p.m. and end at 4:15 p.m. The majority favored 45 minutes because 30 minutes was too short to accomplish anything significant, but 60 minutes pushed the limit for how long people could stay due to childcare issues (February 11th meeting). Norms were established at the first meeting. The following norms were agreed upon:

1. What is said during team meetings about specific individuals is confidential.
This can guarantee open and honest conversation. This norm was established so team members can talk about specific situation instead of generalities.
2. No interrupting other team members when they are talking. This norm allows people to speak their mind without fear of being interrupted.
3. A complaint must be accompanied with an idea for a solution. We did not want these meetings to be complaining sessions.
4. Everyone must participate. To stay on the team, you must share your views.
5. Respect other's opinions. This team wanted to be a model this behavior.

The first order of business for the School Climate Team was to define the constructs within the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Rutgers Secondary. Discussion was held related to supportive and directive administrative behavior. In this discussion, teachers were asked to explain what administration did that was supportive or directive in nature. By defining this behavior, the administration can

focus their time and energy on reinforcing supportive behavior and reducing directive behavior. For example, the team perceived the administration was supportive and consistent when dealing with issue of student behavior. However, the team felt visibility was a concern, and the administration must make more of an effort to be out and about in the building. For teachers, three constructs were measured and these were frustrated, engaged, and intimate teacher behavior. The goal of this discussion was to define these behaviors in an effort to identify what works and what does not. For frustrated behavior, the team agreed that lack of communication is a concern. They believed that intimate behavior was present because teachers did socialize quite often with one another. However, many on the team wanted more opportunities to socialize. Teachers perceived engaged behavior was a problem. This construct was directly linked to teacher morale. Morale is a problem at Suburban High. The original focus on school climate came about due to concerns about low morale. A master list was built that reflected this discussion.

Another aspect of the first two meetings was to get "quick wins." A quick win is something that can be initiated with ease and has a positive impact. In the course of discussion, the team shared its disappointment with teachers who do not show school spirit. A "Pride Day" was put into place. All staff members were allowed to wear jeans if they also wore a shirt with the school's mascot on it. In an effort to show collective support for students, staff signed poster board cards wishing good luck to all extra-curricular activities that would be participating in a state event. The next idea was to set up a gathering for staff outside of the normal school day. It was set up at a local restaurant for the following week. In each instance, a quick win was achieved. Pride in

the school took center stage and it was evident that the School Climate Team was making a visible impact.

The School Climate Team made a decision to make meeting notes public. After each meeting, the notes are sent to the administrator who helps facilitate the meetings. The administrator cleans up the notes to make them readable. The notes are then sent out to the team who has final say on what product goes out to staff. Due to the nature of some of the material, some items are left off with majority approval of the team. However, most items remain intact as the team wanted to be transparent. Every staff member employed at Suburban High gets a copy of the notes. The team felt this was important as we attempted to address concerns with communication within the building.

Many teachers on the team had worked in other schools prior to joining the staff at Suburban High. These teachers were asked to share best practices at their previous schools. One model was discussed in detail. From this model, the idea of supervision was discussed. Teachers overwhelmingly felt supervision was a waste of their time. They did not want to supervise study hall, the commons, hallways, or lunch. It was decided that a proposal for supervision must come from this team. Linked with this proposal would be how to build in collaboration into the school day. The team felt this idea would be a significant change in the culture of the building. They felt it would reshape the role that teachers play at the school. A smaller group within the team took on the responsibility of designing a proposal for the staff to review.

During the discussions, it became clear the team needed more information from the staff. A simple process many schools utilize is a technique known as the expectation diagnosis. Teachers and students write out expectations for both the administration and

certified teachers. There is also a question about the rules that should govern the organization. Participants are asked to use “I” statements about why they like the school, and what they want changed in the school. Finally, the team analyzes the results and guides the process to improve school climate over the next school year (Bulach et al., 1998). This is an easy process to utilize, and it does have all the elements necessary to making climate positive. Following the expectation diagnosis, the team categorized the data.

What will be done. The team will then develop an action plan that has the following sections:

1. The promise (goal), expected effect, primary strategy, and reason for the strategy.
2. Analyze which included evidence of need and evidence of success.
3. The plan will include initial steps, people responsible, measures, and deadlines.
4. The monitor section will have benchmarks and checkpoint dates.

This action plan was based on the concept of continuous improvement. It is a working document that can be adjusted as needed depending on the current state of affairs at Suburban High. This document is currently used for goal setting for administrators at Suburban High.

The School Climate Team suggested the following ideas in order to improve school climate. These ideas were discussed at later meetings. They want to have an open forum for all teachers to have the opportunity voice their concerns about any issue of their choice. One goal of this forum would be to establish a core set of values that guide

teacher behavior. They want to make sure students are part of the discussion each meeting. The team believed students and staff were disconnected from one another. There has been discussion about professional development opportunities to help improve climate. The idea of a book study was discussed. Finally, the team would like to make sure that even though this team is comprised mainly of teachers, all staff should have a say in this process. From this, a decision was made to include an administrative assistant on the team. Overall, many ideas have come up in only two meetings. Further discussion will allow for more ideas that can benefit the school community of Suburban High.

Recommendation II—Students

When working with school climate, students must be listened to carefully. Student input is vital for the success of any school climate plan. Student feedback was solicited from only 10th and 11th graders. Seniors were not included as they will not be around for implementation of the action plan. The development of a Student Advisory Team (SAT) will be paramount to the success of this process. This Student Advisory Team will consist of students who come from a variety of different backgrounds. The team will include English Language Learners (ELL), students who have failed multiple courses, students with a high grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher, students involved in extra-curricular activities, students who are not involved in any activities, and students from non-traditional families. By getting a variety of perspectives, the student body will have a representative sample to speak on its behalf. The culture of Suburban High has traditionally allowed student input only from certain groups such as Student Council and the Principal Advisory Committee (PAC). This team will gain insight from

many students who have never had a chance to voice their opinion. Data gained from these students will provide a foundation for achieving positive change in the climate at Suburban High.

The first order of business for this group will be the development of a survey that better meets the needs of students. The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Rutgers Secondary is built specifically for teachers and administrators. The decision to give the survey was made after Wayne Hoy (March 2008) said it would be worth utilizing the instrument to see if results would be reliable. Students could not answer numerous statements within the instrument. Many expressed their discomfort in trying to answer statements that they had no idea as to the meaning. Another issue was the vocabulary of the OCDQ-RS. When I presented findings to a sociology class, they shared they could not understand some of the terms. They believed some words should have come with a definition. When analyzing the results of the survey, over 80% of all students answered 11 statements. Statements could be categorized into administrative, teacher, and student behavior. Each question had characteristics that all students had the opportunity to observe on a regular basis. The Student Advisory Team will decide if those statements represent what needs to be addressed. This will allow the building of baseline data which can serve as a resource in the school improvement process.

It will be important to gather more data and evidence from the student body. This team will gather more from students by utilizing the expectation diagnosis much like what the teachers did. Students will be asked to list three rules that should govern behavior at the school. This could include a wide range of ideas. I recently met with students currently enrolled in Developmental World History. This is a class for students

who read three grade levels below their same age peers. They expressed concern about the policies that govern cell phones, tardiness, attendance, fighting, drugs, and relationships. Students told me this was the first time anyone asked them what they wanted changed at their school. They said it was the first time anyone listened to them. This was a 30-minute discussion. The implications for a long-term advisory group could be far reaching. Students will also be asked to list one activity they would be willing to participate in at Suburban High. Students at Suburban High who are involved in activities attend significantly higher rate than students who are not involved in extra-curricular activities. Finally, students will be asked to list one activity that would build school spirit. One concern at Suburban High is the apparent disconnect students have with the school. Personalization is something Suburban High has struggled with as it has grown over the years. Teachers have good ideas on how to make connections, but the best source of ideas would be the students.

The next step will be linking the Student Advisory Team with the student organizations that have specific criteria for membership. At Suburban High, this includes National Honor Society (minimum GPA) and Student Council (elected position). For each group, two members from the Student Advisory Team will join the organizations listed above. It will provide each organization with a different perspective. Many of the activities of these clubs have become part of the school's culture. They have a strong tradition and are expected to be done. Like many traditions, they often do not accomplish as much as they could. By adding a school climate element to these organizations, Suburban High could reach its potential.

Conversation has begun on a new idea to get students involved in activities after school. A proposal has been sent to the district office asking for funding for an advisor for a gaming club. This club would allow a different type of student to get involved. A school close to Suburban High has had a gaming club for the past 5 years. We made contact with them and they were willing to share how they began and what they have been doing. A first-year teacher was asked if he would be interested in taking on this club and he was very willing. He has already talked to students and gathered feedback for this club. He has met with the advisor at the neighboring school to set up a plan for implementation. There are plans for members of the club to compete against neighboring schools in games like *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band*. They would represent Suburban High in the community. By linking participation in the club to grades and attendance, this could be the motivating factor for students to give more effort in school. This club is one example that could help students reframe how they feel about Suburban High. A small group of students were told about this club. They have already contacted the administration about when this will occur. They have a list of ideas to present to the advisor. The impact is already being felt.

Recommendation III—Administration

With administration, there is one thing that could be done to facilitate connections to the school. One recommendation would be structuring the school into smaller learning communities by utilizing the house concept. In order to do this, a pilot program will be utilized for the 2009-2010 school year. Students who will be entering their sophomore year will be chosen to pilot the house concept. Twenty-five students who are deemed at-risk based on standardized test scores, grades, and attendance will be put into the house.

The house concept will include core classes. For sophomores at Suburban High, students must take Biology, World History, Algebra I or Geometry, and English II. These four classes will be built into 50-minute periods over the course of the entire year. Four teachers will be the team that will work specifically with these students. These teachers will have no study hall, lunch, or hall supervision in their daily schedule. They will have five classes to teach and two prep periods each day. They will meet two times per week to discuss their students and to work on interdisciplinary units of study. They will have flexible scheduling. For example, teachers may choose to co-teach a class where students are writing a paper related to history for their English class. The teachers could then use their preps for their own time. Each teacher would update the Intervention Team (IT) at Suburban High on a monthly basis. We could provide a continuum of services for students to better meet their needs. Professional development would be important for these teachers. It would be beneficial to explain to students what we hoped to accomplish with this model. Being transparent with students could help earn their trust. This idea will become a reality for the upcoming school year.

The final aspect of this recommendation would be to have students work with administration to help with various outsources. For example, students could read the morning announcements with the administration. Students could be partnered with an administrator and help with the supervision of hallways prior to and after school. The student government could have a say in policy that is implemented in the school. Students could work with administration in design an academic learning center where students who have academic problems can seek out help from peers. Lastly, students could work with the administration to develop and run groups for new students to help

them acclimate to a large school. This concept is a break from many current traditions at Suburban High where the administration performs all of these duties. By looking at how students could partner with administration, the focus can go from what students cannot do to what they can do.

Recommendation IV—Parents

Many parents voiced their concerns about the survey. They perceived the content of the survey to be something only teachers and students could answer. Parents believed they did not have the necessary background to answer the survey in a competent manner. When they were e-mailed, it was made clear that this survey had some items that would be difficult for them to answer. It was also explained that the goal would be to use the most answered items as the foundation of the development of a new instrument. When analyzing the results of the survey, over 50% of all parents answered 10 statements. Statements could be categorized into administrative and teacher behavior. One parent commented that the only frame of reference they had for students was their own. Therefore, they would not comment on student statements. It makes sense to focus parent statements on the people they work with most often in the school setting. Parents work with administration and teachers on a consistent basis. It is important to solicit parent feedback as to what characteristics they prefer in administrators and teachers. By doing this, an instrument can be built that will provide a foundation for reference in future studies.

It is essential to build an instrument that a majority of parents feel comfortable answering. In order to build an instrument that meets our needs, a forum must be set up to gather data. Parent focus groups will be utilized. The groups will reflect the

demographics that were gathered from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Rutgers Secondary. There will be parents who had one child attend Suburban High, parents who had two children attend Suburban High, and parents who had three or more children attend Suburban High. Another group will be parents who currently have their first child enrolled at Suburban High. From these three groups, a variety of data will be gathered that will enable the school to develop better working relationships with parents. The focus groups will be built around the five constructs measured in the OCDQ-RS. Parents will be asked to give specific examples of supportive and directive administrative behavior. They will be asked to provide feedback on frustrated and engaged teacher behavior. Intimate behavior is a difficult construct for parents to describe since this is based on the relationships among teachers both in and out of school. This idea will be talked about briefly only for discussion sake.

The next step will be the development of a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). At the high school level, PTO's are rare. These organizations are usually reserved for the elementary and middle school levels. They primarily perform fundraising duties and do not have an advisory role. The PTO at Suburban High will have two major duties. It will raise funds for student scholarships. The Student Success Scholarship Program (SSSP) began last summer. With the fear of a sagging economy, many local businesses have chosen not to participate by donating money. Therefore, the Parent Teacher Organization would take on the role of raising funds for this program. Suburban High recently entered into a partnership with a local university to offer an early college program. The school offers dual credit classes where students earn both college and high school credit simultaneously. The credits are offered at a reduced rate for students if Suburban High

provides the instructor. The SSSP program has paid for 21 credits for students this year. The SSSP can provide a head start for students on their postsecondary education.

The Parent Teacher Organization will also serve as an advisory team on issues that specifically affect students. They will help guide the development of policy on everyday matters that influence students. Some examples would be cell phones and dress codes. They could provide a practical perspective to policy. The advisory team will also be a sounding board for new ideas and program that Suburban High is proposing. This may open the lines of communication from the school to the community. Parents are looking for ways to get involved. At Suburban High, this is usually reserved for the post-prom and graduation party. Parents run these events and do a fantastic job. We can use their abilities and connections to help all students in our school. We need manpower to accomplish our goals. Parents will get involved if their role is significant and makes a difference in their lives and the lives of others. This advisory team concept can create a partnership with the parents that will benefit both the school and community.

Recommendation V—Joint Team

The final recommendation will be the development of a joint team made up of teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Each group plays a significant role in the educational system at Suburban High. With the demands facing our society today, only a partnership can get results that will make a positive impact. The joint team will take on the most pressing issues facing the school today. Suburban High has a serious drop-out problem. Only 78% of the students who enroll in the school as a ninth grader attend the school in 4 years. With the drop-out problem, there are also concerns of substance, physical, and emotional abuse. The district has attempted to develop an action plan to

help reduce the drop-out rate and the other damaging behaviors. However, there are no students or parents on this committee. By leaving students out, we ignore the very group we are trying to help. By not asking parents for input, we take away the people who have one of the greatest impacts on students. By including all participants, a plan can be developed which is truly all encompassing. A drop-out problem is not just a school problem. It is a community problem. All groups must take ownership of the problem in order to fix it. Students in the surrounding area of Suburban High were surveyed last year and asked if they felt the community valued them. Just over 75% of the students said the community did not value them. By having monthly meetings that focus on student success, students will see the community truly values them. A community can come together for the good of their greatest asset—the students. By focusing their attention and passion on the students of today, a better tomorrow can become a reality.

Recommendation VI—Suburban High School District

The Suburban High School District must be accountable for the climate and culture it has created over the past years. Too often, districts ignore the voices of dissent by rationalizing these voices as the minority. By ignoring these voices, the district has allowed the minority to grow in population. Every district will have its share of teachers who will complain about a majority of initiatives that occur. By not addressing issues in a prompt manner, it has lent credibility to those staff members who are the dissenting voice. There are three recommendations for the Suburban District related to the Board of Education and central office administration.

The Board of Education and central office administration must do a better job of communicating with teachers, parents, and students. Regular board meetings can not be

the main source of information. Personnel from both groups should hold monthly meetings to inform all staff members about the 'state of the district'. This forum would allow for input from teachers, parents, and students on issues that affect them. It would show these groups that their opinions matter. Some members of the groups would not attend, but they had the opportunity. It is tough for people to complain about communication when they have chosen not to communicate themselves.

Visibility is an issue in the Suburban High School District. Many people have expressed their concern about the lack of visibility of district leadership. Board members and central office administration must do a better job of attending public events related to Suburban High. These people need to attend sporting events and music concerts on a regular basis. They must visit the school during the normal hours. This would show teachers, parents, and students that they are involved in the school and care about what happens there. By doing this, these people will be seen as members of the school community. Their actions may be seen as genuine and this will give board members and central office staff the opportunity to be accepted. Overall, visibility must get better if the district is going to have community members buy in to the vision and mission.

The Board of Education must include in its budget resources for addressing school climate on a yearly basis. By setting aside money, the leadership is making a statement that school climate is important to them. The district is in relatively good health. However, as with anything, it could be better. Financial resources could be utilized to make the district a better place to work. A purposeful commitment will help teachers, parents, and students understand that the district leadership is concerned about their welfare.

It will be a struggle for the climate of Suburban High to improve without the board and central administration making changes. The leadership in the district is strong at both the board and central office level. The vision and mission of the district is strong and this system has the potential to be a model district. Suburban High has its own problems, but not all of them are their own doing. The board and central office administration must take ownership of some of the issues within the district. By doing this, they will allow the school and district to focus its attention on student growth. If this occurs, there are no limits to what can be accomplished.

Recommendation VII—University of North Dakota Educational Leadership Program

The doctoral program designed by the University of North Dakota is solid. It allows working professionals the opportunity to expand their horizons in a manner that is accommodating. There are high expectations by staff and the program truly attends the best administrators and teachers in the surrounding area.

The first class I took in the program was related to organizational theory. Climate and culture were topics in this class. However, it was not a major focus. This study has reinforced the idea that climate is important in the success of a school system. The Educational Leadership department would be wise to add a class where the sole purpose is culture and climate. It should not be based on theory, but practical application. Administrators and teachers need strategies to work with the climate in their schools. This class could bring in local administrators who could share their best practices. By doing this, attends would be more prepared to work with the climate in their buildings.

My other recommendation is for the department to reconsider the offerings in the program. The classes were good, but some of them did not meet the needs of a practicing

administrator or teacher. For the Doctorate of Education degree, a more practical approach needs to be implemented. Theory is important, but it is only theory. There needs to be more hands-on experience. By doing this, you will make practicing professionals better at their jobs as they go through the program. It is important for this program to give the students strategies and techniques to do their jobs more efficiently. It is my hope that the department changes their focus for this degree in the future.

Conclusion

In closing, this study concludes that school climate is an important aspect of a school system. Perceptions differ among teachers, parents, and students. These different perceptions must be acknowledged and addressed. By addressing these perceptions, teachers, parents, and students can benefit both as individuals and as a school community.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Suburban High Climate Survey

Survey: Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire—Rutgers Secondary

1. The mannerisms of teachers at this school are annoying.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
2. Teachers have too many committee requirements.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
3. Teachers spend time after school with students who have individual problems.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
4. Teachers are proud of their school.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
5. The administration sets an example by working hard himself/herself.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
6. The administration compliments teachers.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
7. Teacher-administrator conferences are dominated by the administration.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs
8. Routine duties interfere with the job of teaching.
☐ Rarely Occurs
☐ Sometimes Occurs
☐ Often Occurs
☐ Very Frequently Occurs

9. Teachers interrupt other faculty members who are talking in faculty meetings.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
10. Student government has an influence on school policy.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
11. Teachers are friendly with students.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
12. The administrators rule with an iron fist.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
13. The administration monitors everything teachers do.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
14. Teachers' closest friends are other faculty members at this school.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
15. Administrative paperwork is burdensome at this school.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
16. Teachers help and support each other.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs
17. Students solve their problems through logical reasoning.
- _____ Rarely Occurs
 - _____ Sometimes Occurs
 - _____ Often Occurs
 - _____ Very Frequently Occurs

18. The administration closely checks teacher activities.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
19. The administration is autocratic.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
20. The morale of teachers is high.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
21. Teachers know the family background of other faculty members.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
22. Assigned non-teaching duties are excessive.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
23. The administration goes out of his/her way to help teachers.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
24. The administration explains his/her reason for criticism to teachers.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
25. The administration is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
26. Teachers invite other faculty members to visit them at home.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs

27. Teachers socialize with each other on a regular basis.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
28. Teachers really enjoy working here.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
29. The administration uses constructive criticism.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
30. The administration looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
31. The administration supervises teachers closely.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
32. The administration talks more than listens.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
33. Students are trusted to work together without supervision.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs
34. Teachers respect the personal competence of their colleagues.
_____ Rarely Occurs
_____ Sometimes Occurs
_____ Often Occurs
_____ Very Frequently Occurs

Appendix B

Survey Approval



Novice Fawcett Chair in Educational Administration

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March 31, 2008

Mr. Cory Steiner
418 17th Street East
West Fargo, ND 58078

Dear Mr. Steiner:

I grant you permission to use the OCDQ-RS in your research for you doctoral degree at the University of North Dakota.

Good luck in your studies,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne K. Hoy".

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor of Educational Administration

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